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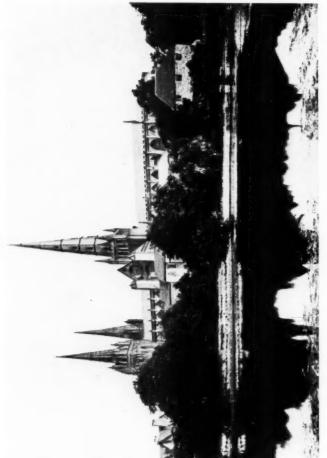
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A DAY OFF: LICHFIELD.

By W. R. CREDLAND.

FOR the "dem'd total" of 3s., as Mr. Mantalini would have phrased it the London and North-Western Railway Company will, on any Saturday afternoon during the holiday season, snatch you from the dust and glare and the "madding crowd" of the streets of Manchester, and whirl you away through mile after mile of our lovely England, the beauteous garden of the old world, until you come to that quiet haunt of ancient peace named Lichfield. The locomotive is our modern substitute for the magic carpet possessed by King Solomon the Wise, whereof we read in that most beloved and enchanting classic of our youth, the Arabian Nights, that the most knowing of kings was wont to seat himself upon it on his throne, and with a host of warriors around him, be carried flying through the air to whatever haven he desired. We cannot quite accomplish this feat as yet, but when the present day magician whom we call a "guard" has waved his green flag, the ugly walls, the squalid houses, the tall, grim chimneys, and the black pall of smoke seem to drop behind us like the passing away of a baleful dream, and lo! we are rushing

through the green-clad country, with the bright sunshine about us gladdening the very cockles of our hearts, and the pure air of Heaven gently kissing our cheeks.

For more than seventy miles, through Crewe and Stafford, and deep into the heart of Staffordshire, the railway carries you in the brief space of some two hours to Lichfield. From Stafford to the Cathedral city the country traversed is as an endless park. The pastoral poet of the past sang of scenery such as this, and his heart and his lyre were attuned to a wondrous sweetness by its sylvan beauty. Were it not that the smoking compartment of a third-class railway carriage is too ridiculously modern an entourage, one might fancy that here in these lush meadows where the cattle lie lazily ruminating over their cud, or beneath the shade of yonder spreading oak whose fellow giants of the forest stretch away like a waveless sea flecked with tints innumerable of emerald and orange and russet till lost in vague and purple distances, there are Damons piping to their Phyllises, and Chloes and Daphnes dancing and singing, and with light dalliance of love fleeting the happy hours away. But alas! instead of the sweet music and laughter of these ideally happy folk there is a sudden shriek from the engine, a man is leaning over from the opposite seat asking for a match, and the world of Virgil and Theocritus vanishes in a moment into the golden mist of dreamland.

When you step upon the platform of the Trent Valley Station you reflect comfortably that there is a mile and a half in which to stretch your limbs between the refreshment room and your destination. The air on this delicious July afternoon is laden with the perfume of flowers and the pleasant and pungent scent of new-mown nay. You take the footpath that meanders through those fields known hereabout as "Paradise," because of their beauty, and in-

stantly feel, as the loveliness of the scene is unfolded before you, that they deserve even such a name. Here the genius loci at once challenges your worship, for this was one of the favourite walks of a certain Sam Johnson, the most considerable and imposing figure among the men of letters of the 18th century, and the man who, by being born there, has made the name of Lichfield deathless in the annals of his country. There, too, by your path stands the tree called "Johnson's Willow," a descendant of that other willow beneath whose wide shade the Great Cham of Literature loved to rest, and which he failed not to visit whenever he returned to his native city. Not far away is the well named after St. Chad, the patron saint of Lichfield and founder of its Cathedral, because on its marge he was wont to stand for hours together in a state which would have acutely interested the modern policeman, but to him was merely expressive of prayerful abasement, as the lovely old tradition hath it. He was also a worker of miracles, and we are told that on one occasion, to prove the power of faith, he hung the cloak of a Saxon gentleman named Wulfhere upon a sunbeam, leaving it there without visible means of support. On his death-bed, in his cell, he was attended by a company of angels, who cheered him in his last moments with their celestial harmony, as you shall read at length, if so disposed, in that veracious book, the "Ecclesiastical History," written by the Venerable Bede.

From these fields the dainty little city of Lichfield presents a charming picture. Before you is a vast sheet of placid water, and beyond it rises the Cathedral with its three beautiful spires tapering into the sky's deep blue, while other spires rise from many points in this city of churches, and accentuate with their cool greys the red and white of the houses nestling round them. We stroll along somewhat narrow and undulating streets into Dam Street,

where the eye is arrested by a tablet let into the wall above the porch of one of the houses. It records an incident of that terrible and disastrous Civil War of ours, that conflict which rests like a pall upon our annals, yet has, however, for us of these later days, a certain compensation in that its records are a fertile and happy hunting-ground for the lover and purveyor of romance. The Cathedral Close was the only part of the town ever fortified. At the period of the Civil Wars it was surrounded with water, and walls and bastions rendered it a place of considerable strength. In 1643 the Close was garrisoned by the inhabitants of the town under the Earl of Chesterfield. Roundheads soon made preparations to attack the Cavalier stronghold, and invested it under the command of Lord Brooke, whom the historians are delightfully unanimous in calling a "fanatic." Their attack on the fortifications was directed from Dam Street by Lord Brooke in person, and, as the tablet records, it was while watching the fighting from a window that he was shot through the head by a gentleman named "Dumb Dyott," who was posted on the battlements of one of the towers of the Cathedral. The Cavaliers were delighted, and asserted that the bullet had been specially sped to its billet by St. Chad, upon whose anniversary, singularly enough, this event happened. Archbishop Laud has left a note in his diary which indicates somewhat of the depth of hatred which that unhappy war created between brother and brother and father and son. He says:

Lord Brooke, coming to rifle and deface the Cathedral at Lichfield solemnly at the head of his troops, begged of God to show some remarkable token of His approbation or dislike of the work they were going about. Immediately after, when looking out of a window, he was shot in the forehead, when we see that, as he

asked of God a sign, so God gave him one, signing him in the forehead, and that with such a mark as he is likely to be known by to all posterity.

At the top of Dam Street you reach the crowning glory of the place. It is a picture that once seen is stamped on the mind, and remains for ever a lovely and precious remembrance. Basking in the clear sunlight is the Minster Pool, with the beautiful and imposing south front of the Cathedral rising on its farther side behind a long reach of magnificent trees. Here and there amid the foliage peeps out a gable, or a window glints with points of light. Green banks slope gently down to the pool's edge, grand old sycamores, beeches, poplars, and willows overhang its surface, making dark, mysterious depths of shade, and the picture is repeated in the still waters of the lake as sharply as in a mirror. A faint ripple disturbs the water where a passing zephyr has breathed upon it, and there come sailing towards you two splendidly-plumaged swans, expectant doubtless of a share of the abundant admiration with which your heart is overflowing. Crossing the pool at its western end is the road which takes you to the Cathedral Close, and as you pause for a moment upon the left-hand parapet of the bridge, your eye roves over a pleasant vista of the public park, where you notice, among other fascinating things, how charmingly the red coats of the "military" tell amid the bevy of white-clad nurse-girls which surrounds every one of them. The sons of the "Widdy of Windsor" throng the streets, for this is a garrison town, and little more than two miles away are some 3,000 of them in permanent encampment. In fact, the two great powers of the State, the spiritual and the temporal, are everywhere in evidence, and the juxtaposition will have its significance and suggestiveness for those who are given to the awkward pastime of thinking.

Standing before the western front of the Cathedral, the effect upon the mind of those who see it for the first time, and who have seen other of our great cathedrals, is that of slight disappointment. It appears to lack massiveness and grandeur. This feeling slowly gives place to an almost overpowering sense of perfect beauty, and this dainty, aerial, lovely conception dawns upon you at length as the finest flower of architectural art. The soul is glad that the mind of man should have imagined so fair a vision, and rejoices that his hand should have given it form and substance in imperishable stone. That it should have been treated with irreverence, its towers been battered down, its monuments defaced and destroyed, and its most sacred places used as a dunghill by men who were Englishmen, seems now a thing too vile for belief. May heaven defend it from the like again! The ancient and noble pile should not be made the object of a hasty visit. It is an epitome of fifteen hundred years of English history. It is the tangible expression of ideas which have had a more powerful influence on the literature, art, morality, and life of the world than any others yet conceived; and those fortunate ones who have leisure to make it the subject of serious and loving study will find therein ample and priceless recompense for their labour.

We note that a row of bicycles is leant against the whole length of the iron railings of the west front, hardly leaving space for another amongst them. Down upon them, as represented by statues, columns, arches, stained-glass windows, and heaven-soaring spires, the middle-ages look. The contrast is acute almost to pain. The 19th century uses all its ingenuity, all its beauty of workmanship, all its accumulation of knowledge and skill upon the creation of a toy, something that shall contribute merely to physical enjoyment and well-being; whilst the poor benighted

mediæval time spends itself in the production of the loveliest thing it can conceive, not to amuse itself withal, but that it shall remain throughout the ages to serve as a seemly and befitting shrine wherein man may devoutly bend the knee in the presence of his God. Perhaps, however, this may be a comparing of the incomparable, but certain it is that the impression made upon us by this incongruous mingling of past and present was somewhat saddening. We entered the sacred edifice, and found that afternoon service was proceeding. The service is not High Church, yet is there about it a pleasant flavour of antiquity, and, listening to it, the presence of the stress and strife of the life of to-day becomes less insistent, the influence of the beauty of the place and the calm of the past falls upon you, and for a time you feel and are folded in the peace that passeth understanding.

Let the grace and delicacy of the architecture of the nave, and the decorative charm of the stained-glass windows of the Lady Chapel gradually sink into your soul. Then should you turn your eyes to the monuments, for many here have the deepest interest. Yonder, under the east window of the south aisle, is Chantrey's masterpiece, the "Sleeping Children." It is in very truth a thing of beauty. Through the consummate skill of the master the cold white marble has become tender and poetic. The grace and naturalness of pose of the forms of the sleeping children, the loveableness of the thought embodied in the placing of a bunch of snowdrops in the hand of one of them, the sweetness and calm of the features, all combine to fulfil the sense of beauty, and the gentle pathos of this sleep of death touches the source of tears. On the opposite side is Chantrey's kneeling figure of Bishop Ryder, whose clear-cut face is eloquent, even in marble, of the fineness of the soul that erstwhile illumined it.

Here, too, are busts of Johnson, of Garrick, of Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of him who applied the theory of evolution to mankind, and monuments keeping green the memories of Anna Seward, the poetess and friend of Sir Walter Scott; of that erratic creature Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; of Dean Addison, the father of Joseph Addison, who created for us that most gracious figure, Sir Roger de Coverley; and of many warriors and ecclesiastics of old and of later time, who now rest equally well, whether in their lives they fought for King or for God. A marble slab, which seems to have been removed, once had place in the nave near the west door. It was thus inscribed: "Here lies the body of Mrs. Elizabeth Blaney, a stranger; she departed this life the 2nd September, 1694." Now this romantic young woman very nearly became the mother of the great Sam Johnson, that is, in the sense that she was within an ace of marrying his father. Mr. Boswell tells us in his ever-delightful autobiography, which he amusingly calls "The Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, LL.D.," this little anecdote:

Mrs. Blaney [Misses were called Mrs. in those days] was a young woman of Leek, in Staffordshire, who, whilst Mr. Michael Johnson, the father of Dr. Samuel Johnson, served his apprenticeship in that town, conceived a violent passion for him, and though it met with no favourable return, she followed him to Lichfield, where she took lodgings opposite to the house in which he lived, and indulged her hopeless flame. When he was informed that it so preyed upon her mind that her life was in danger, he, with a generous humanity, went to her and offered to marry her; but it was then too late—her vital power was exhausted, and she actually exhibited one of the vary rare instances of dying of love.

What a handsome and lucky young dog that papa of Sam's must have been to have incited in the gentle bosom of the tender Elizabeth a flame so burning as this, for it was evidently not the fashion to die of love in those days any more than it is now, or Bozzy would not have quoted this as "a very rare instance."

Amongst the military monuments you will note that those which record the deeds and the deaths of the men of Staffordshire are so numerous as to tell, all too eloquently, of the price in blood that has been paid for that glorious "expansion of the empire," which we have been so greatly exulting in of late. Most of our great and little wars of the century have claimed their tale of victims from the brave lads of the county. Here on the walls of the House of God droop, ragged, dusty, and at rest, many a banner that has been borne to victory through battles that must have seemed to those engaged in them as very carnivals of hell. Surely there is a strange irony in thus consecrating to God, as it were, emblems which have fluttered in the breeze whilst thousands of the creatures of His hand, "made in His own image," have been maimed and rent and torn and hurried into eternity with the horrible lust of battle in their hearts, and curses on their lips. The Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the Chinese and Burmese Wars, the wars in Egypt, all have their monumental records here. There is one of them dedicated to the memory of a man the story of whose deeds will ever stir the hearts of Englishmen as with a trumpet-blast. This is Major W. S. R. Hodson, of Hodson's Horse. He was like a Paladin of old. He was as daring and fearless, as knightly and without reproach as any amongst that noble throng which filled the Court of Arthur. The tale of his doings during the Indian Mutiny is not only written in our histories, but should be imprinted on our hearts. He yielded his life in his country's cause, and by his valour averted a great calamity. Whilst human nature is as it is, war will doubtless remain a terrible necessity, yet if it produces in men such great qualities as those displayed by Hodson-courage,

resource, discipline, contempt of pain, and fearlessness of death—we shall assuredly reap some compensation for its bitter evils.

Should you yearn to see them, the obliging and eloquent verger will show you some of the balls which the ungodly Roundheads fired in battering down the central tower, as also certain of the antiquated weapons used by the beseiged. He will point out where in the walls is to be seen the last remnant of the Saxon Church erected on the site, and show you the pretty little chapel dedicated to St. Chad, which has been recently restored. Then you shall mount with him a winding staircase until you come to the Library, wherein you shall see many rare and curious manuscripts and books and handle that copy of South's "Sermons" which seems to have been beloved of Johnson, for in his large, sprawling hand he has written on its leaves many pious "marginalia." The most ancient and curious thing here is the vellum manuscript, which you will be told is St. Chad's Gospels. It is written in Latin, but in the Anglo-Saxon character, and contains the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and a portion of Luke. The initial letter of each Gospel is very finely drawn and beautifully illuminated, and there are portraits of the three saints drawn in the style of the early Irish School. St. Chad himself, the first Bishop of Lichfield, is supposed to have written the volume. Other treasures are a copy of one of the products of our first printer, Caxton, to wit his "Lyfe of King Arthur"; a copy on vellum of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," the initial letters being coloured and gilt and highly ornamented, a manuscript copy of a curious old treatise entitled "Dives and Pauper," and many other rare and quaint things.

In a certain classic of our literature, which I will not insult you by naming, save to the extent that it was written

by a little gentleman whose initials were James Boswell, you shall read as follows:

When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps, "Now," said he, "we are getting out of a state of death." We put up at the "Three Crowns," not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property.

Thus records the delightfully garrulous Bozzy on occasion of one of those jaunts to his birthplace, which never lost their charm for Johnson. More than a century later, we, too, drawn thither by that perfervid fascination called "hero worship," so mordantly diagnosed for us in the pages of Carlyle, may, if we choose, put up at the good old-fashioned "Three Crowns," and make the most ceremonious bow we are capable of as our host introduces us to the shades of the great lexicographer and his fidus achates, Jemmy Boswell. You enter a somewhat small room called the parlour, and are assured that it is preserved in much the same condition as when Johnson sat over there in the large oldfashioned chair by the fire, whilst Boswell and a few ancient local cronies disposed themselves in sufficiently venerating attitudes about him, listening to the utterances of the great oracle, and accentuating the all too brief intervals in his monologue, with pulls at the mugs of Lichfield ale gracing that little round table you still see in yonder corner, or with stolid puffs at their long "churchwardens." As you sit in the chair which the present-day Boniface will assure you was ofttime filled to overflowing by the "too-solid flesh" of weighty Sam, and imbibe a libation of ale of like brew to that so joyously recommended by the old-time host in "The Beaux Stratagem," your fancy harks back through the mists of the past and slowly envelops you in a cloud of pleasing reminiscence. You feel to be waiting there, not without inward qualm and trembling, for that introduction to the wonderful animal which Mr. James Boswell, its proprietor, has promised you, and are wondering vaguely how the "great bear" will address you, and what shall be your deportment toward so eminent a personage. Anon there falls upon your musing senses the discord of a heavy tread, and as the small room becomes pervaded by a presence you jump up from the chair (said to have been Johnson's), blushing guiltily, because you have had the impudence to deposit your insignificant self therein, and find with joy that it is but your host who has brought in a fresh and foaming mug of Lichfield ale.

As in duty bound, if you be a true Johnsonian, you inspect the birthplace itself, and are pleased to note that the quaint old house is lovingly preserved. There is not much in its rooms to remind one of the genius of the place; but, looking from the windows, the eye rests upon the colossal figure of the Doctor sitting at his ease in the middle of St. Mary's Square, lost in thought, and with his strong, calm face turned towards his father's house. There are some personal relics of Johnson's in the town's Museum, but it would surely be more seemly were they transferred to this house of his, and were the place, which is now apparently in private hands, thrown open to the public. There is ever a closer and tenderer intimacy of association attaching to those spots where the great ones of the earth were born, than to any of their after-haunts, and such places should be held sacred. That laudable association which has made it a duty to endeavour to preserve for our pleasuring the pleasant spots and historic sites of our country should add to their list of things to be done, without delay, the purchase of the birthplaces of Johnson and of Tennyson. No true lover of our literature will feel quite content until these hallowed mementos of men of genius, whom we

all hold in honour and reverence, are made public property, and secured as effectually as loving care and requisite expenditure can avail from the destroying hand of time.*

The statue of Johnson in the small Market Square is not, according to the critics, a high-class piece of workmanship, yet it impresses the mind by its massiveness and by the artistic rightness of the lines and pose of the figure. The figure is in truth colossal, but removed, as it is, some twelve feet above the eye by an immense pedestal, it does but seem to render more faithfully the huge proportions of the "mountainous Doctor." The rather heavy features, copied from the well-known portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, have been touched to a calmer and benigner expression than we see in the portrait. A pile of large tomes lies beneath the chair on which the Doctor is seated, and he holds a volume in his hand. On the pedestal are three bas-reliefs, not meant to be humorous, but two of them irresistibly tickle the fancy of the most sober devotee of the Johnsonian cult. In one, Johnson is represented as hardly more than a baby, bestriding his father's shoulders, resting his chin on the old boy's bald head, and listening within a foot of the nose of Dr. Sacheverell, whilst that rampant

^{*} Since the above was written the following letter has appeared in the public press :- "Sir,-Allow me, on behalf of the city of Lichfield, to state that the house in which Dr. Samuel Johnson was born, situate in our Market Place, has, through the munificence of a citizen (Alderman John Gilbert) and other circumstances, become the property of the Corporation here. Although it is necessary to postpone its more complete reparation to a later and favourable date, the Town Council have arranged to open it at Whitsuntide, when the public will be admitted in much the same way as at other birthplaces -at Stratford-on-Avon, Olney, and elsewhere. I therefore venture to appeal to the literary public generally for books, prints, manuscripts, pictures, and other objects of interest relating to the Doctor, whose life and great personality are so intimately bound up with the city of Lichfield. The names of all donors will be appended to their gifts. All letters and parcels should be addressed to the Town Clerk, Lichfield.-Yours faithfully, GEORGE HAYNES, Mayor. Lichfield, 4th May, 1901."

divine is flooding the child's brain with his non-inspiring eloquence. In a second panel he is depicted riding to school on the shoulders of two comrades, with a third in the rear supporting the weightiest portion of his anatomy. The remaining panel, however, is decidedly touching. It records that fantastic incident in Johnson's life which has been provocative of much criticism and not a little irreverent chaff. It shows Johnson in the market place of Uttoxeter doing penance for an act of disobedience to his father committed fifty years before. He stands bare-headed -a venerable figure-and a countenance extremely sad and woe-begone, with the wind and rain driving against him, helping to suggest the gloom of his inward state. Market people and children stand about, wondering what this strange freak may mean, and ducks and poultry and other commodities of sale complete the incongruous scene. The statue is the work of Mr. R. C. Lucas. Productions of this heroic size were greatly unsuited to his powers, which are best shown in his numerous medallion portaits. It was presented to the town in 1838 by Dr. J. T. Law, then Chancellor of the diocese.

It occurs to you that Garrick, magnificent actor and delightful dramatist, he whose death eclipsed the gaiety of nations, was one of the first pupils of Johnson. But in this instance your ardour for reverencing birthplaces must be curbed somewhat, for it was not here but at the Angel Inn in Hereford, that Garrick was first introduced to the world. He was, however, sent to Lichfield Grammar School to be educated, and while there he formed that friendship with Johnson which ceased only with his death. You saunter along quiet and somewhat narrow streets until you come to St. John Street, and there, opposite the ancient Hospital of St. John, stands the Grammar School. The present building was erected in 1850, and replaces the old

school built in 1692, wherein three men, famed even amongst the most famous in our literature, Addison, Johnson, and Garrick, received their education. St. John's Hospital, one of the most ancient structures in the city, is very quaint. It presents to the street a row of eight huge brick chimneys, which add to the singular appearance of the building, but not to its beauty. It seems that before these chimneys were erected fires were lighted in the centre of the apartments, the smoke escaping through a cupola in the roof, and the sapient improver of that primitive style of heating and ventilation evidently found it more convenient to place his grates at the front instead of the back of the building. The Hospital is inhabited by poor Brethren who must have lived honestly, and upon whom the inconveniences of poverty and old age have fallen without any fault of their own; and amongst other virtues they must possess are that they "must not be quarrelsome, nor frequent taverns, nor associate with suspected persons." If the old boys were quite good, and behaved themselves to the content of the Master, they were to "receive sevenpence a week for ever, which the Master was to pay every Friday, after dinner, without deduction." This allowance has now become six shillings a week, with a cloak thrown in occasionally.

In Bore Street, not far away, is a beautiful and well-preserved specimen of Tudor domestic architecture, as fine as any similar work in Chester. It is a gem either for the antiquary or the snap-shooter. Strolling down Bird Street, you make acquaintance with two of the oldest inns, the George and the Swan. Both have historic interest, and the Swan, when you have passed its entrance archway, carries you back in imagination to the old coaching days, with all their romance of runaway marriages and desperate encoun-

ters with the masked gentlemen of the road. Its large courtyard, with the inn windows looking thereon on one side, and nearly all the remainder of the square surrounded by stabling, over whose ugliness ivy and vine and other creepers have thrown a lovely veil of green, shows how lively the roads were in the days before the advent of steam. In these later times they are becoming almost as gay with life as ever, but now the steeds need but small housing, and their riders are perforce restricted to the mild debauch of an occasional soda and milk. In the continuation of this street, and near the Cathedral, stands the Museum and Public Library. There are many excellent specimens of the art of the Potteries in the Museum, and should you feel that looking upon those things that once were actual personal possessions of a departed idol brings him nearer to your heart, here are certain trifles that Dr. Johnson cailed his own, and daily used.

Passing the Cathedral a short walk by the Minster Pool and through a lovely valley brings you to Stow Pool, on whose margin is the pretty little church dedicated to St. Chad. At the foot of Stow Hill is the house where once resided that eccentric character, Thomas Day, the author of "Sandford and Merton." Luckily for us, we of this generation have not been nurtured, as our less happy grandfathers were, on this portentious piece of wrong-headed wisdom, and know it only through the delicious fooling of Mr. Burnand in his "New Sandford and Merton." During Day's residence there a number of literary and scientific folk who have become more or less celebrated, lived in Lichfield and its neighbourhood, and formed a pleasant little coterie amongst themselves. There was Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of our great scientist-Charles Darwin-who sang "The Loves of the Plants" with such verbosity and scientific abandon that a vast quarto was

filled with the throbbings of his lyre. There was also Mr. Lovell Edgeworth, whose daughter Maria has given us a most entertaining sketch of his character and of his many matrimonial adventures. As might have been guessed concerning a man almost as "much married" as the late Brigham Young, he invented a "perambulator," and was one of the earliest to suggest workable ideas about the velocipede and telegraphy. Among the rest were the engineers Boulton and Watt, Dr. Priestley, Sir W. Herschel, the father of Anna Seward, the poetess, and occasionally Johnson. They held monthly meetings at each other's houses, and Darwin called these gatherings "lunar meetings." Anna Seward was the most gifted poet that Lichfield has produced, and some of her verse, were it not so deeply tinted with the mannerism of her time might be read with pleasure to-day.

St. Chad's Church should not be left unvisited. It is one of the most ancient structures in the vicinity, and you will be informed that it is supposed to have been originally erected by the Romans about the end of the second century. In the present church there are traces of Norman architecture, of early English decorated, and Gothic, showing that it has passed through many transitions. It was near this site that Lichfield's patron saint, St. Chad, lived in and apparently enjoyed his cell, and close by you still may see the well by whose marge he loved to offer up his devotions. This was one of those wells which were "dressed" on Ascension Day before that ancient and charming custom of "well dressing" was abandoned in these parts.

A pleasant walk by the edge of the Pool and through sweet-scented fields of meadow and nodding com leads you to Greenhill whereon the great event of the year, for the youthful Lichfieldians, is still consummated on Whit Monday. This festival, now known as the "Bower," was

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anciently styled "The Country Array, or View of Men and Arms," and though in these days it is shorn of much of its ancient splendour, and the "Bower" business has degenerated into little more than an excuse for a rowdy fair, with its fat women shows, penny theatres, toffee stalls, and all the usual row and racket of such "high jinks," it is still carried out with sufficient adherence to old-time custom to make the proceedings of interest to the antiquarian and sufficiently diverting to the spectator. This was the old order of it.

Early on Whit Monday the high constables, with ten men, armed with ribbon-adorned firelocks, preceded by eight morrice dancers, a fool fantastically dressed, and drums and fifes, escorted the Sheriff, Town Clerk, and Bailiffs from the Guildhall to the Bower on Greenhill. Here the style and title of the court was proclaimed by the crier, and the enrolled names of the citizens called over. This was the "Court of Array, or View of Men and Arms," and was necessary before the establishment of a regular military force, to show who were capable and liable to the carrying of arms. The Statutes of Array were repealed in the reign of James I., and, therefore, this part of the business then lost its meaning. The Court, with its motley following, afterwards marched through the streets, and were joined by the constables and "dozeners" of each ward, who anciently bore the effigies of saints, but afterwards were content to carry garlands of flowers or trade emblems. The Morrice dancers danced, the armed men fired their guns, and thus the procession slowly made its joyous and noisy way through the principal streets of the city. During the day the inhabitants of the several wards were "regaled with cold hanged beef, stewed pruins, cakes, wine, and ale," at the expense of the Corporation. One old chronicler naively admits that this jolly way of spending

the public money was "gratifying to many." We easily believe him, but now that the fun has to be provided by subscription, there is hardly enough of it to go round, and it is not quite so fast and furious as it must have been in the good old times.

A stroll of half a mile from the city, and you are at Barrow Cop Hill, where tradition tells you three Kings are buried, and this legendary "fact" has given to Lichfield her arms. There is a building on the hill top, from which you get splendid views over a magnificent stretch of country, wherein the town lies like a picture in a vast framework of emerald and gold.





CHAUCER'S TALE OF SIR THOPAS.

BY GEORGE MILNER.

A MONG the Canterbury Tales "Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas" holds a peculiar place. It is the only one in which a purely lyrical measure is used, all the rest being, with the exception, of course, of the prose tales, in the rhymed heroic couplet, or at least, as is occasionally the case, in heroic lines rhyming alternately. It is also remarkable because the poet makes it, along with the prose story immediately following-" The Tale of Melibeus "-his own contribution in person to the amusement of the pilgrims. Its importance is further enhanced by the fact that it is a critical satire in the form of a parody upon the early metrical romances of chivalry. Professor Saintsbury, in his "History of Criticism," the first volume of which has been recently published, places Dante first as the highest genius of the Middle Ages, and Chaucer second; and contends that during a period which displayed but small accomplishment in criticism, it is to these two poets that we are to look for the earliest and fullest development of the critical spirit. In Dante's case we have it in prose-in the "De Vulgari Eloquio"-and in Chaucer diffused through nearly all his work. "Chaucer," he says, "had all or almost all, the necessary qualifications of a critic-a real knowledge of literature, a distinctly satirical humour, a large tolerance, a touch decided, but not too frequent, of enthusiasm, an interest in a very wide range of subjects and forms. And he is actually a critic in embryo, and more, throughout his work. The 'Boethius' and the 'Astrolabe,' the 'Rose' and the 'Troilus,' half the 'Canterbury Tales, more than half the minor works, are saturated with literature-could have come from no author but one who was saturated with literature. There is uncrystallised criticism on every page. There is even some crystallised criticism in the 'Sir Thopas,' and perhaps elsewhere." Now it is because "Sir Thopas" may be appropriately taken as representing this element of literature and criticism in Chaucer that it becomes worth while to give more attention to that particular poem than has usually been given by students and commentators. Probably most readers think of Chaucer as the interpreter of life, of manners, and of external nature, and not as in any large degree a bookish poet; but we may all remember what he says about books in the "Legend of Good Women":

And if that oldé bokés were awey,
Y-lorné were of remembraunce the key.
Well ought us, thanné, honóuren and beleve
These bokés, ther we han noon other preve.
And as for me, though that I konne but lyte,
On bokés for to rede I me delyte,
And to hem give I feyth and full credence,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
So hertely, that there is gamé noon
That fro my bokés maketh me to goon

The introduction to "Sir Thopas" is for ever memorable in virtue of its containing a wonderfully minute and spirited picture of the poet drawn by himself. What would we not give for a portrait of Shakespeare similar in its origin?

Then follows the "Rime." It is in a swinging ballad

measure, a little irregular, but the type is a stanza of six lines, four octosyllabic, arranged as couplets, divided by a line of six syllables, but which rhymes with a similar line at the end of the stanza. Notwithstanding the serious criticism which underlies it-serious, yet playful and good-humoured -Chaucer would have called the thing a "jape." It comes immediately after that solemn and beautiful tale of the Prioress, which was so charmingly modernised by Wordsworth. A change was needed from grave to gay, a change also in subject and metre, and we get it in "Sir Thopas." It is clearly a parody, and both lines and phrases are frequently taken from the romances which it is intended to satirise. Sir Thopas is brought before us as a perfect knight -a flower of chivalry. His lineage and birth are duly set forth. He was born at Poperyng, in Flanders, not far from His personal appearance is given with absurd circumstantiality. And here the satire begins, for this was the manner of the old romancer. His face was white as payndemayn-probably a very white kind of bread-his lips were, of course (following the still extant convention), red as a rose; though white he was ruddy and his rode or ruddiness was like scarlet in the grain, and then, with a fine double thrust at the common triviality of these descriptions and the usual resort to an obvious rhyme, we are told that "he had a seemly nose." From that point the reader feels that the knight's nose, like that of M. Rostand's hero, is borne aloft in the air. But this is not enough. His hair and his beard are like saffron, and reach down to his girdle, his shoon were of cordewane, and his robe was of cloth of gold, which had cost many a "jani" (a Genoese coin). He could hunt the wild deer, ride a-hawking with a grey goshawk on his hand; he was a good archer, and at wrestling none was his peer. From his physical qualities we turn to his moral perfections. He was chaste and no

lecher, sweet as the bramble rose which beareth the red hip, and for him many a bright maid mourned in her bower when, as the poet says, with a characteristic side-thrust of satire, she had far better have been asleep. Then he goes upon his adventures, mounted on a grey steed; in another part of the ballad the horse gets the well-worn name of "dapple-grey"; a lance in his hand, and a long sword by his side. Of course he pricketh through a fair forest among wild beasts, but under his feet are delicious but incongruous herbs, and over his head the birds sing-both thrustlecocks and parrots, full loude and cleere. No earthly woman is good enough for him; he will have nothing less than an elf queene, and finds his way into the land of Fairye, and so the story goes on, including a long account of how he was armed for a fight with a three-headed giant, to the end of the first fit. Then the poet asks in curiously modern phrase if they will have any more of it: "If ye wol any moore of it, to tell it wol I fonde (try)." Having received no answer, he nevertheless proceeds with his second fit, reminding his hearers of the romances of great price, "Hornchild" and "Ypotys," "Bevis," and Sir Gy, Lybeaux and Pleyn-damour, but declaring that Sir Thopas beareth the flower of royal chivalry! He has, however, got but half-way through his fifth stanza when the host breaks in rudely and stops him with "Na moore of this, for Goddes dignitee." Probably Chaucer timed this interruption to follow immediately after the information that Sir Thopas never slept in any house, but lay in his hood on the grass, and only

> Drank water of the well, As dide the Knyght Sire Percyvell.

ascetic characteristics which were not likely to meet with the approval of mine host of the Tabard. The conclusion, is given not in the ballad measure, but in heroic verse, and in it the host tells the poet that he shall rhyme no longer, and begs him to give them somewhat in prose, in which there shall be at least either some mirth or some doctrine.

It may be well now to give a few brief specimens from the "Rime" itself to illustrate the style and the nature of the metre:

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
And I wol tellé verrayment
Of myrthe and of solas;
Al of a knight, was fair and gent,
In bataille and in tourneyment,
His name was Sire Thopas.

The briddés synge, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the papejay,
That joye it was to heere.
The thrustelcok made eke hir lay,
The wodédowve upon the spray,
She sang full loude and cleere.

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-inne was a boré's heed,
A charbocle bisyde;
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that the geaunt shal be deed,
"Bitydé what bityde!"

The regularity of the metrical arrangement in these lines is very marked. Indeed, I imagine that some of our modern critics would contend that if they have a fault it lies in their being too monotonously smooth. The fact is that until recent years the difficulty in reading Chaucer has been greatly exaggerated. It is to this that we owe the neglect of him by the general reader, and the attempts which have been made—some successful, some futile—to present him in a modern dress. Chaucer scholars all insist upon the ease with which he may be read. Perhaps they are a little too sanguine, but on the whole their contention is sound.

Mr. Richard Morris says: "Chaucer is as easily understood as Spenser and Shakespeare. Not many of his terms are wholly obsolete, and but few of his inflections have gone wholly out of use." Mr. Robert Bridges, writing to me a short time ago, says: "It is delightful to find that Chaucer is now read in his proper dress. To me he is far less oldfashioned than Pope." But we may go much further back and find the same opinion expressed. In 1834, a time when a contrary view would be generally held, Coleridge said: "I cannot in the least allow any necessity for Chaucer's poetry, especially the 'Canterbury Tales,' being considered obsolete. Let a few plain rules be given for sounding the final "e" of syllables, and for expressing the termination of such words as 'ocean' and 'nation,' etc., as dissyllables; or let the syllables to be sounded in such cases be marked by a competent metrist. This simple expedient would, with a very few trifling exceptions, where the errors are inveterate, enable any reader to feel the perfect smoothness and harmony of Chaucer's verse."

"A few plain rules" is all that Coleridge asks for. No doubt this subject might be greatly extended, and if all the points of metre and grammar and pronunciation were gone into and tabulated, the rules would be both intricate and many. But however this may be desirable for the Chaucerian specialist, it is not necessary for the general reader, who only wishes to be able to comprehend the author's full meaning, and to scan his verses in such a manner as to make them harmonious. What, then, are these few and plain rules? 1. That the final "e" is not used arbitrarily as a syllable to make up the metre; but that it is an older grammatical form still in use in Chaucer's time, and that it is generally silent when it comes before a word beginning with a vowel, and sometimes before the letter "h." This is, in effect, nothing more than the rule

still observed in reading French verse. 2. The pronunciation of all words of French origin with an accent on the final syllable-thus, coráge, honóur, adventúre, conditióun, resoún, vertúe, licoúr. 3. Elision or the contraction of two weak syllables into one. This was much practised by Chaucer, and was no doubt regarded by him as an ornament to his verse. Most modern poets use the same license with more or less frequency, and generally with advantage. These are all the rules that are absolutely necessary. There is, however, something further to be said which may be of more use and importance than any of the rules. Chaucer's ear was so good and his rhythmical system so perfect that if you can read his lines so as to make them metrically harmonious, you will almost always find that you have adopted the right pronunciation—in other words, that which he intended you to use. There are two classes of readers-those who, not having a good rhythmical ear, evolve the measure with more or less accuracy from the lines as they read them; and those who, having the measure singing in their heads beforehand, read the lines according to that measure. Readers of the second sort will seldom go wrong with Chaucer.

Those who allow themselves to be deterred by the difficulties alluded to leave unexplored one of the fairest provinces of our literature. Spenser spoke of his great predecessor as "the pure well-head of poetry," and for Englishmen he retains that position to-day. To fall back upon his vernal freshness, his buoyancy of tone, his perennial good humour, his broad commonsense, his shrewd yet tolerant observation of men and manners, together with his tender love of solitude and nature, is to be delivered from the corrupting, the enervating, the saddening influence of much of our modern verse. I will venture to quote again from Coleridge, who is hardly ever wrong in matters of criticism,

in order to enforce this view of Chaucer's characteristics. He says:

I take increasing delight in Chaucer. His manly cheerfulness is especially delicious to me in my old age. How exquisitely tender he is, and yet how perfectly free from the least touch of sickly melancholy or morbid drooping.

This passage was given in the "Table Talk" for 1834, but eighteen years earlier in the "Biographia Literaria" he had written:

Through all the works of Chaucer there runs a cheerfulness, a manly hilarity, which makes it almost impossible to doubt a correspondent habit of feeling in the author himself.

There are poets whose work is acceptable to us only in youth; there are those who come to us with healing in middle life, and chief among these is Wordsworth; there are also those who help us to "warm both hands at the fire of life" in our old age, and among these Chaucer, who is also the poet of the dawn, takes the first place.





OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

By R. H. SELBIE.

N the 7th of October, 1894, the sad tidings were cabled to this country that Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was dead. The news was quite pected, and perhaps this accounts in some measure for the comparatively little notice that was taken of it in the public press. His writings had up to the last been so fresh, so vigorous, so free from any suggestion of declining power that we forgot that the philosopher of the breakfast table had far outlived the allotted span, and had, in fact, turned the corner of his 85th year. No true lover of Holmes will, however, regret that he did not receive the doubtful honour of having his name embalmed in every provincial newspaper. To all who knew Holmes, if only through his books, the loss was felt to be a personal one, and for such information as they desired to have of the manner of his life and death they knew where to turn. Only some of our leading and more literary newspapers and periodicals sketched his career and reviewed his works, and this they did reverently and sympathetically. Surely this was most in accord with the fitness of things. During his life Holmes did not court popularity, and cared nothing for the plaudits of that general public who, as Mr. Birrell puts it, "subscribe to Mudie, and have their intellectual, like their lacteal, sustenance sent round to them in carts."

Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in the year 1800 in an old "gambrel-roofed house" in Cambridge, Mass., and it is interesting to note in passing that the same year saw the birth of several other notabilities, amongst them Gladstone, Tennyson, Monckton Milnes, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Poe, Darwin, and Abraham Lincoln. Writing to a friend a few years before his death, Holmes says: "I took my first draught of that fatal mixture called atmospheric air on the 29th of August, 1809." And in another letter he says: "The year 1700 was made ponderous and illustrious in English biography by the birth of Samuel Johnson. My own humble advent to the world of protoplasm was in the year 1800 of the present century." It is said that Holmes used to take no small delight in the fact of this connecting link of a century between himself and the great Cham of Literature, and was wont every now and then to turn up his Boswell to see what his illustrious predecessor was doing on that particular day a century ago.

Holmes' father was a clergyman with Calvinistic leanings in Cambridge, and was also a writer of some note on American history. His mother, Sarah Wendell, was the daughter of a lawyer of considerable reputation, so that from both parents he inherited professional instincts. Holmes' schooldays, so far as we have any record of them, were uneventful, and he was entered in 1825 at Harvard University. It was during his early college days that he first showed signs of possessing the poetic genius which he afterwards developed. A proposal was on foot to break up the old frigate "Constitution," which had become un-

seaworthy. To Holmes, with his fine susceptibilities, this appeared to be little short of sacrilege, and his indignation found expression in a short lyric, in which he pleaded strongly for its preservation. It is pleasing to know that he did not plead in vain, and that violent hands were not laid on the old craft. His first intention was to adopt the legal profession, and for twelve months Blackstone and Chitty were his text-books. But law does not appear to have won his affection, and we find him commencing his second College year in the Medical School. Here he went through the usual curriculum, and in 1833 visited Europe, spending a considerable time both in Edinburgh and Paris in the prosecution of his studies. In 1836, on his return to America he commenced to practice, living with his father in the old house at Cambridge, and afterwards, on the latter's death, removed to Boston, where he married. In 1847 he was appointed to the Chair of Anatomy and Physiology at his own University of Harvard, and he held this position until so recently as 1882, when he felt it his duty to make way for a younger man.

Treating of Holmes as a lecturer, his biographer says, after describing the lecture theatre, with the partly-dissected body upon the table:

To such a scene enters the poet, the writer, the wit, Oliver Wendell Hoimes. Few readers of his prose or poetry could dream of him as here in this charnel-house in the presence of death. Respect for poor humanity and admiration for God's divinest work is the first lesson, and the uppermost in the poet-lecturer's mind. He enters, and is greeted with a mighty shout and stamp of applause. Then silence, and there begins a charming hour of description, analysis, simile, anecdote, harmless pun, which clothes the dry bones with poetic imagery, enlivens a hard and fatiguing day with humour, and brightens to the tired listener the details of a difficult though interesting study. As a lecturer he was accurate, punctual, precise, unvarying in patience over detail, and though not an original anato-

mist in the sense of a discoverer, yet a most exact descriptive lecturer, while the wealth of comparison, illustration, and simile he used was unequalled. Hence his charm; you received information and you were amused at the same time. He was always simple and rudimentary in his instruction. His flights of fancy never shot over his hearers' heads. "Iteration and reiteration" was his favourite motto in teaching. "These, gentlemen," he said on one occasion, pointing out the lower portion of the pelvis bones, "are the tuberosities of the ischia, on which man was designed to sit and survey the works of Creation." But if witty, he could also be serious and pathetic; and he possessed the high power of holding and controlling his rough auditors.

It was during his occupancy of the Professor's chair that most of his literary work was accomplished. We may date his literary reputation from the year 1857, when a magazine, entitled the "Atlantic" first appeared under the editorship of James Russell Lowell, and to which Holmes contributed the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." This was followed by the "Professor at the Breakfast Table" in 1860 and by the "Poet at the Breakfast Table" in 1872. Of his novels, "Elsie Venner" came out in 1861, "The Guardian Angel" in 1868, and "A Mortal Antipathy" in 1885. He also produced at various times several works of a technical character on medical subjects. In 1886 he paid a second visit to England and France, accompanied by his daughter, an account of which he published in the following year under the title of "Our Hundred Days in Europe." His last work, "Over the Teacups," appeared in 1890, and between that date and his death four years later he contributed many articles and poems to magazines.

Holmes seemed to take a peculiar delight in the feeling that he was growing old, and it often formed the subject of his verses during the later years of his life. Here is a stanza written on his seventieth birthday:

Time claims his tribute; silence now is golden.

Let me not vex the too long-suffering lyre,
Though to your love untiring, still beholden,
The Curfew tells me—Cover up the fire!
And now, with grateful smiles and accents cheerful,
And warmer heart than look or word can tell,
In simplest phrase—these traitorous eyes are tearful—
Thanks, brothers, sisters, children—and farewell.

And again:

Youth longs and Manhood strives, but Age remembers— Sits by the raked-up ashes of the past, Spreads its thin hands above the whitening embers That warm its creeping life-blood to the last.

The call came to him unexpectedly, and just as he would have wished it. He experienced none of those "cold gradations of decay" which are so much to be dreaded. Within a very few days of his death he was out and about taking his usual walks, and at the last he was sitting in his study chatting pleasantly to his son, when suddenly, and without warning, "God's finger touched him, and he slept."

Such is a brief resumé of the main facts in the life of Dr. Holmes, gathered from his biography as written by Mr. J. T. Morse. To that gentleman we are indebted for two most delightful volumes, entitled the "Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes." Of strictly biographical matter, they contain comparatively little, for the reason that Holmes' life was almost entirely devoid of incident. With the exception of his two visits to Europe he spent practically the whole of his life in or near Boston. "Fortunately," says Mr. Morse, "the picturesqueness of poverty was never his, nor the prominence of wealth. Days and years glided by with little to distinguish them from each other, in that kind of procession which those who like it call tranquil, and those who dislike it call monotonous."

In these volumes we find a full, and no doubt accurate,

account of Holmes' labours in the fields of medical science and of literature, and deeply interesting that account must be to all his admirers. The great charm of the book, however, is in the letters. Holmes made a fine art of letterwriting, though he was diffident in its practice, and one only needs to be acquainted with his style in the Breakfast Table books to be sure that his letters to his friends must be of exceptional interest, and of a high literary order. Amongst his correspondents we find the names of James Russell Lowell, Phillips Brooks, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, J. G. Whittier, John Lothrop Motley, and many others less known. The subjects upon which he writes are even more numerous than his correspondents, and include almost every conceivable topic from the immortality of the soul to the maximum length of a rattlesnake. The letters are so many and varied, so full of humour, freshness and vitality, so thoughtful and yet so apparently effortless, that it would be impossible to adequately convey any idea of their character by quoting extracts from them. They must be read to be appreciated, and of the man who fails to appreciate them it may truthfully be said that he has been taught to read in vain.

In the case of a man such as Holmes a written biography is in no sense necessary to the formation of a correct estimate of his character and life work. To the careful reader of his books a biography can contain little that is new concerning him beyond the mere accidents of his life. In so far as it deals with his thoughts, opinions, aspirations, speculations, and philosophy, it can only be a more or less imperfect epitome of his writings. The biography tells us of the Dr. Holmes who died on the 9th October, 1894; in his books we have the Oliver Wendell Holmes who still lives. All that was noblest, all that was immortal in him is reflected there. From those pages he still speaks to us,

cheers us when depressed, counsels us when in difficulty, inspires us with lofty ambitions, calls out our sympathies to the aid of the downtrodden and unfortunate, points with unmistakable distinctness to the difference between profession and conduct, and never fails to direct us to the true source of all real happiness and prosperity. Leigh Hunt, in his essay on "Books," makes this remark : " I should like to remain visible in this shape. The little of myself that pleases me I should wish to be accounted worthy of pleasing others." Holmes somewhere expresses the same wish, but on higher grounds. He wished to remain with men in the shape of his books, that they might have the benefit of his long years of study and observation of human nature in its varied aspects, and we must admit that his profession afforded him exceptional opportunities of prosecuting such a study. Though it may not be generally admitted, I certainly look upon Holmes as a teacher. Not in any didactic or scientific sense, but nevertheless a teacher of great truths. His writings are full of the milk of human kindness, and I defy any honest-minded man to read carefully any of his books, be it novel, table-talk, or volume of poems, without feeling that he has had his sympathies enlarged and his love of truth and justice strengthened. He hated all narrowness, bigotry, and intolerance in whatsoever sphere of life it appeared, and under whatsoever disguise, with a perfect hatred, and was never afraid of saving so. He wished to remain with men in the shape of his books that he might help and instruct as well as please them, and we can well imagine his saying, in the words of another poet:

For me to have made one soul
The better for my birth;
To have planted but one flower
In the garden of the earth;
To have struck one blow for truth
In the daily fight with lies;

To have done one deed of right
In the face of calumnies;
To have sown in the souls of men
One thought that will not die;
To have been a link in the chain of life—
Shall be immortality.

We have not many examples of the combination of the professions of medicine and letters. Holmes' time, taking his life as a whole, was pretty equally divided between his two professions. He never allowed his literary work and engagements to interfere with the faithful discharge of his duties either as College Professor or general practitioner, and he drew largely upon his experiences in both these capacities in his novels and essays, and his writings are enriched by the allusions and illustrations they afford.

Now and then these medical metaphors come in a most quaint and unexpected manner. In his verses on musicgrinders he refers to the blissful quiet that comes when the street organ has moved away, and says:

But, hark! the air is still again,
The music all is ground;
And silence, like a poultice, comes
To heal the blows of sound.

And again, in speaking of the miseries and trials of authorship, he says: "I am always glad to hear that any literary friend of mine is doing as well as can be expected when he has had a book." There is another good story related of Holmes which may be mentioned in this connection. Walking down the street one day, a physician told him of an amusing marriage—a love match—which had occurred in his family, wherein the bride was eighty-eight years old and the groom a trifle younger. Holmes was greatly amused. Coming to his house, he walked slowly

up the steps, then suddenly turning, running down, and calling after his companion, he said: "Of course, they didn't have any children; but tell me, did they have any grandchildren?"

As I have already mentioned, Holmes' claims to literary reputation date from the year 1857. At that time America had no first-rate, purely literary, magazine, and the opportunity was taken by the publishing house of Phillips, Sampson and Co., of Boston, to commence such a publication. They were fortunate in securing the services of James Russell Lowell as editor, and he was still more fortunate in persuading Holmes to become a regular contributor. It was Holmes who suggested the name for the magazine which has since become so famous, viz., "The Atlantic." In casting about for a subject for his first paper, Holmes called to mind two articles he had contributed during his college days, twenty-five years previously, to the "New England Magazine," which lived only from 1831 to 1835. These articles were written in a discursive and conversational style, and as Holmes himself puts it, "the recollection of these crude products of my uncombed literary boyhood suggested the thought that it would be a curious experiment to shake the same bough again, and see if the ripe fruit would be better or worse than the early windfalls." That he shook the bough to some purpose we all know well, for the result was the series of papers which appeared under the nom-de-plume: "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." The style of writing immediately took the public fancy, and the success of the magazine was assured.

Mr. Morse, in his very admirable Memoir, is at some pains to allot Holmes his precise place on the roll of literary fame and to show in what way he must be differentiated from other American writers.

He contends, and no doubt rightly, that Holmes did not write as an American, but as a New Englander; that he does not in his books interpret the life and thought of America, but of New England; in other words, that, as a writer, he was not national so much as racial or provincial. The descendants of the original Puritan settlers had during successive generations kept the State of Massachusetts exclusively to themselves, and had thus become, "for all social, moral, and intellectual purposes, a race." It was Holmes' function in the Breakfast Table books to present this people to his readers. In his novel he draws for us pictures of them, but "The Autocrat," to quote Mr. Morse, "is not a picture of New Englandism; it is an actual piece of New England cut solidly out of the original body." This is, of course, exceedingly interesting, but I doubt whether it had anything to do with the enthusiasm with which the book was received on its first appearance, or with the place which it has ever since held in the affections of both Englishmen and Americans. I am rather inclined to think that it is the strong human element that pervades the book and the atmosphere of a large charity breathed from every page that endears it to us.

"The Autocrat" is generally allowed to be Holmes' best and most representative work. It bears evidence of his fine sense of humour and his high poetic genius. Its pages contain some of the author's choicest verses, and the prose-writing abounds with poetical conceptions. He introduces us to his fellow-boarders, and reports something of their sayings and doings, but the large proportion of the book is composed of his own table talk. Notwithstanding this, it is free from all trace of egotism, and it never occurs to one to ask what the other boarders thought of the autocrat "holding the floor" so continually. With one exception, viz., the schoolmistress, Holmes tells us very little

about his audience round the breakfast table, and yet we seem to know them all intimately, such knowledge being acquired chiefly from the questions they ask and from their manner of receiving the communications of the Autocrat. The characters in many a modern drawing-room novel whose pedigrees and peculiarities, love affairs and hate affairs, are laboriously impressed upon us, have far more of the puppet about them than the lodgers in this Boston boarding-house. "The old gentleman opposite," "the young man called John," "The Divinity Student," "the Schoolmistress," and "the Landlady," are all living people to us, and we hail them as old friends when we meet any of them again in the pages of the author's subsequent works.

In addition to the poetry and humour which the book contains, there are many examples of that delightful fooling in which Holmes not infrequently indulges, as instance the following, which he wrote as a skit on the nonsense which so often appears in provincial papers under the heading "From our Foreign Correspondent." This is supposed to emanate from "Our Sumatra Correspondent":

The principal vegetable productions of this island are the pepper tree and the bread-fruit tree. Pepper being very abundantly produced, a benevolent society was organised in London during the last century for supplying the natives with vinegar and oysters as an addition to this delightful condiment. During the season of gathering the pepper the persons employed are subject to various incommodities, the chief of which is violent and longcontinued sneezing. Such is the vehemence of these attacks that the unfortunate victims of them are frequently driven backwards for great distances at immense speed. Not being able to see where they are going, these poor creatures dash themselves to pieces against the rocks or are precipitated over the cliffs, and thus many valuable lives are lost annually. The bread tree grows abundantly. Its branches are well known to Europe and America under the familiar title of maccaroni. The smaller twigs are called vermicelli. They have decidedly an animal flavour, as may be observed in the soups containing them. Maccaroni, being tubular, is the favourite habitat of a very dangerous insect, which is rendered peculiarly ferocious by being boiled. The Government of the island, therefore, never allows a stick of it to be exported without being accompanied by a piston by which its cavity may at any time be thoroughly swept out. These are commonly lost or stolen before the maccaroni arrives amongst us. It therefore always retains many of these insects, which, however, generally die of old age in the shops, so that accidents from this source are comparatively rare.

Please do not mistake me. I have not quoted this passage as an example of Holmes' humour. I have called it "delightful fooling," and am not disposed to put it any higher. Humour at its best is too subtle a thing to lend itself readily to quotation. A funny or a jocular man is not necessarily humorous. A great many people who can crack, and even see, jokes don't know what humour is. It has been frequently pointed out of late that many people labour under a grievous misconception as to what humour really is. To many the terms wit and humour are synonymous, which is a fatal error. Someone has said that "humour is the electric atmosphere and wit is the flash." But this is only half the truth. Some few years ago it was my privilege to hear Canon Ainger, of Bristol, who, it will be remembered, is Charles Lamb's great champion to-day, lecture on "False Wit and Humour in English Literature." His definition of humour, and the manner in which he showed that it was not necessarily provocative of mirth, were most excellent, and one expression he made use of I shall never forget, as it seems to me to contain the pith of the whole matter. It was this: "There is humour that is too deep for laughter, just as there is sorrow too deep for tears." Holmes was a great wit, but he was a greater humourist. His wit was the product of his mind; his humour came from his heart. It is his wit that tickles our fancy and makes us laugh; it is his humour that stirs our deeper emotions and sympathies. It is his wit that we applaud; it is his humour for which we love him.

Holmes has been spoken of as the Charles Lamb of America, and from the nature of the work of the two men the coupling of their names together is almost inevitable. To every true Englishman, however, there is something sacred about the very name of Charles Lamb which forbids that any other should be bracketed with, and much less put before it. I shall not, therefore, enter upon any comparison between the two men, but content myself with saying that in my humble judgment they differ from one another only as "one star differs from another star in glory."

In the conversations round the breakfast table the Autocrat covers a wide range of subjects, and if he does not go very deeply into them or throw any strikingly new light upon them, there is no mistaking the fact that his words are those of a man who has thought for himself and dipped deep into the well of knowledge. Holmes was a master in the "art of putting things," and the style of writing which he chose as the vehicle of his thoughts was specially well adapted to the exercise of that art. I have come across some poor belated people who say that they cannot read "The Autocrat," that they have not the patience for it, and that they cannot do with the way in which the author hops about from one subject to another. Why, his very discursiveness is one of his greatest charms. I quite admit that for certain ends and under certain circumstances it is necessary to keep the thoughts in one specific groove, but it is neither necessary nor desirable in all one's reading to have the mind chained to one subject like a bear to a pole.

Holmes does not, as I have hinted, set up as an authority on the many questions on which he touches, still less does he attempt to force his opinions upon us. His object in his more serious writing seems to be to lead the reader more by hints and suggestions than by actual assertions to think for himself on the various speculative and other questions which he introduces. However sure of his ground he may be, he would not have anyone to follow him blindly. "I don't want you," he says, in one place, "to believe anything I say. I only want you to try and see what makes me believe it." If he finds himself at any time getting out of the depth of his imaginary audience round the table he allows one of them to pull him up sharply by the putting of an irrelevant question or the perpetrating of a bad pun. Once when he had been interrupted by one of the latter, he directed an elaborate tirade against the nuisance of punning, and ended by saying: "People who make puns are like wanton boys who put coppers on railroad tracks. They amuse themselves and other children, but their little tricks may upset a freight train of conversation for the sake of a battered witticism." "The Autocrat" abounds in little aphoristic sentences of this kind: "Sin," he says in one place, "has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all." "He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged." "Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the case and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection." "Nature, when she invented and manufactured authors, made critics of the chips that were left." "The sound of a kiss is not so great as that of a cannon, but its echo lasts a great deal longer."

One other quotation only must I give from "The Autocrat." He is in one of his more serious moods, and has been talking about individual responsibility and

the necessity for every man "being fully persuaded in his own mind" as to the right course of action and conduct in the highest matters.

I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. To reach the port of Heaven we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it; but we must sail, and not drift or lie at anchor. There is one very sad thing in old friendships to every mind that is really moving onward. It is this, that one cannot help using his early friends to mark his progress. If we take the old familiar simile of a fleet leaving the harbour and sailing in company for some distant region, we can get what we want out of it.

There is one of our companions; her streamers were torn into rags before she had got into the open sea, then bye and bye her sails blew out of the ropes one after another, the waves swept her deck, and as night came on we left her a seeming wreck, as we flew under our pyramid of canvas. But, lo! at dawn she is still in sight—it may be in advance of us. Some deep ocean-current has been moving her on, strong but silent; yes, stronger than those noisy winds that puff our sails until they are swollen as the cheeks of a jubiliant cherubim. And when at last the black steam-tug, with skeleton arms, which comes out of the mist sooner or later, and takes us all in tow, grapples her and goes off groaning and panting with her, it is to that harbour where all wrecks are refitted, and where, alas! we, towering in our pride, may never come.

The "Professor at the Breakfast Table" appeared during the year 1860. Some of the old faces are still at the table, and there are others that we have not met before. The "young man called John" is there, with his smart, slangy sayings. The "Old Gentleman opposite" smiles over his coffee as benignantly as ever. The divinity student, the landlady, her daughter, and their poor relation are also present. Amongst the new faces the most interesting are those of a little deformed man known as Little Boston and a young girl called Iris. This book, unlike the others of the series, contains a tragedy for this and nothing less, is the narrative of the life and death of Little Boston. His

grandmother had been hanged for a witch, and the iron of that injustice had entered his soul. His latter days were sweetened by the love that was born in him for the young girl Iris, who tended him with the gentleness and devotion of a sister during his last illness, and held his hand even as he passed through the dark valley. The writing in the Professor is perhaps more serious than in either of the companion volumes, and it contains two of the author's most beautiful hymns. The kindliness of Holmes' disposition and his faith in the Divine love being "broader than the measure of man's mind" come out strikingly in the closing paragraph, in which he says:

And so my year's record is finished. The Professor has talked less than his predecessor, but he has heard and seen more. Thanks to all those friends who have from time to time sent their messages of kind recognition and fellowfeeling! Peace to all such as may have been vexed in spirit by any utterance these pages have repeated. They will doubtless forget for the moment the difference in the hues of truth we look at through our human prisms, and join in singing inwardly this hymn to the Source of the Light we all need to lead us, and the warmth which alone can make us all brothers.

And then follows the hymn so well known to us, beginning:

Lord of all being, throned afar-

Twelve years elapsed before the publication of the "Poet at the Breakfast Table," the third and last of the series. All the old boarders have now disappeared, and we are introduced to an entirely new company round the table. Like "The Autocrat," the book contains a romance. Among the boarders is a young astronomer who has his room in the attics, and spends his days in reading about the starry heavens and his nights in gazing upon them. There is also in the house a young woman, who is wearing her life away in writing little stories for so many, or rather for

so few, dollars for so many pages for the publishers of third-rate magazines. The astronomer, with the rashness of youth, undertakes to lighten the weariness of the poor girl's existence by revealing to her some of the mysteries of his science. She had not, however, examined many stars through his telescope before he invited her attention particularly to a certain double-star situated on the right foot of Andromeda. He explained how the two stars shone for each other and made a little world of their own. sequel is easy to guess. Other delightful characters in the book are Scarabee, an old entomologist, whose life and labours were devoted to the discovery of a supposed new branch of the beetle family, and the "Old Master." It is into the mouth of the latter that Holmes puts a little speech on music, with the sentiment of which we must all agree.

I don't like your chopper music. That woman-she had more commonsense in her little finger than forty medical societies-Florence Nightingale-says that the music you pour out is good for sick folk, and the music you pound out isn't. Not that exactly, but something like it. I have been to hear some music-pounding. It was a young woman with as many white muslin flounces round her as the planet Saturn has rings, that did it. She gave the music-stool a twirl or two, and fluffed down upon it like a whirl of soapsuds in a hand-basin. Then she pushed up her cuffs as if she were going to fight for the champion's belt. Then she worked her wrists and hands, to limber 'em I suppose, and spread out her fingers till they looked as if they would pretty much cover the keyboard from the growling end to the squeaky one. Then those two hands of hers made a jump at the keys as if they were a couple of tigers coming down on a flock of black and white sheep, and the piano gave a great howl as if its tail had been trod on. Dead stop-so still you could hear your hair growing. Then another jump and another howl, as if the piano had two tails and you had trod on them both at once, and then a grand clatter and scramble and string of jumps, up and down, back and forward, one hand over the other, like a stampede of rats and mice more than like anything I call music. I like to hear a woman sing, and I like to hear a fiddle sing, but these noises they hammer out of their wood and ivory anvils—don't talk to me—I know the difference between a bull-frog and a wood thrush.

The main idea of the three Breakfast Table books is Talk. Holmes was a famous talker, and his conversation ever bore the impress of his strong personality. Thackeray paid a graceful tribute to this fact on one occasion when he wrote to Holmes to support an invitation sent to him to visit this country. "Come to England," he said; "come to stay, if only to talk to us. We will welcome you everywhere if you will only let us listen to you." Bearing this in mind, we no longer wonder that his Breakfast Table chat should be so acceptable to us, or that this should be regarded as the richest part of the legacy he has left to the world. Throughout the three volumes there is not to be found a single instance in which he employs his wit in such a way as to hurt the feelings of any individual or to offend any class. No matter what a man's opinions might be, so long as he held them honestly he was sure to find a listener, if not a sympathiser, in Holmes. Acrimony was foreign to his nature, and he scorned to hit below the belt. He was possessed of a great heart and of that gentleness of disposition and consideration for others that go to make up the true gentleman. He was ever ready to make or to hear excuses for anyone who was led by misfortune or bad training to take a warped or narrow view of life, and to make every allowance for those who differed from him on even vital points. He was what most men would call tolerant, but I hate the word used as it generally is to-day. What is now known by the name of tolerance ranks as one of the virtues, but so far as my reading of our great "Guide Book" goes, I have not come across the injunction that we must tolerate our neighbours. The Pharisee tolerated the publican in the Temple, but we know which of them went home feeling the better. It is doubtful whether the millennium will be brought very much nearer by our tolerating one another. It is not difficult to read between the lines of the three volumes I have been speaking about that Holmes bore to those less gifted and less happily circumstanced than himself a far nobler feeling than that of tolerance.

One other point I should like to name before leaving the Breakfast Table Books. Have you not noticed how often in reading them you find expressed thoughts and ideas which at some time or other you have been conscious of yourself, but have never had the opportunity, or possibly the courage, to put into words? There are passages which to the casual reader convey very little meaning, but which to the thoughtful man who, by a careful study of the books, has brought himself into thorough sympathy with the writer, have a hidden and a deep significance, and commend themselves not only to his intelligence, but to his heart. reading such passages during Holmes' lifetime many of us must have felt that, though the bottomless Atlantic lay between us and the writer of them, our spirits were for the moment in very close communion with his in a sphere where time and place do not exist. In experiencing this relation to him we were reminded of

Ships that pass in the night and speak each other in passing Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness; Thus on the ocean of life we pass and speak one another Only a voice and a thought, then darkness again and a silence.

Holmes produced three novels, viz., "Elsie Venner,"
"The Guardian Angel," and "A Mortal Antipathy." From
what I have been able to learn, they are not widely
read to-day, but they appear to have had an extensive circulation at the time they were published and for some years
afterwards. As works of fiction they do not rank very

high, and anyone who is not prepared to face pretty frequently a whole chapter unrelieved by a word of conversation, and possibly having no direct bearing upon the story itself, had better leave these novels alone. They are, however, eminently characteristic of their author, and this is surely sufficient guarantee of their worth to anyone who has sat with him at the Breakfast Table.

In "Elsie Venner" Holmes deals with a certain peculiar phase of the heredity question, and to my mind does so more convincingly, because more scientifically, than Ibsen in any of his plays. The Doctor's studies had led him to a belief in the existence of a closer connection between the human mind and body than is generally allowed, and while admitting that the story of "Elsie Venner" has no direct foundation on fact, he states that in it "through all the disguise of fiction a grave scientific doctrine may be detected lying beneath some of the delineations of character." It is a weird story of a girl who had a strange affinity with serpents in consequence of her mother having been bitten by a poisonous rattlesnake very shortly before giving her birth. Holmes' purpose in writing the book was to discuss the question as to how far one's responsibility is affected by inherent tendencies due to pre-natal causes.

It is interesting to note in this connection, and as evidence of the pains which the Doctor took to perfect his work and render his descriptions realistic, that while the book was being written he kept a live rattlesnake in a cage at the College, and spent a good deal of time in watching it and prodding it up in order to familiarise himself with its habits and character.

As a story "Elsie Venner" lacks plot, but abounds in incident. It contains a fight, several love affairs, and an attempted murder, the last-named being in the most

approved American style, the villain endeavouring to strangle his victim by casting a lasso over his head as he flew past him on horseback. But the real charm of the book for us to-day lies not in these things, nor yet in the scientific theories advanced, but in the touches of nature which it reveals, in the sympathetic character of the writing, and in the thousand and one little asides, which, while totally irrelevant to the narrative itself, are in delightful harmony with the thoughts induced by the story in the mind of the attentive reader.

It is not necessary to deal at any length with the other two novels, seeing that they run upon very much the same lines as "Elsie Venner," and treat of the subject of heredity in other but less startling phases. The love for humanity which prompted Holmes to devote his life's work to the discovery of means for alleviating the ills to which our flesh is heir led him also in his writings to seek to throw light upon some of the mysteries which surround our mental and spiritual being with a view, if possible, to enlist our sympathies on behalf of those whose maladies lie beyond the reach of medical science.

One other of Holmes' prose works calls for mention—
"Over the Teacups"—which he brought out only four years before his death. It was written in his 81st year, or, as he quaintly puts it, when he was three-score years and twenty. The title is appropriate. The two first of the Breakfast Table series were written in the morning of his literary career; now he has reached the evening of his life. The writing has still about it much of the old vigour and charm, and in character does not differ materially from "The Autocrat" and "Poet." It is noticeable, however, and surely significant, that while the author shows no diminution of interest in speculative questions, such as those treated of in his earlier works, he appears to lean

more confidently upon the great eternal verities, and insists more strongly upon the necessity of our acceptance of them, and of our shaping our conduct and lives accordingly.

To turn now to Holmes as a poet, I said at the beginning of this paper that Holmes possessed the true poetic genius, and I think it is not difficult to justify that statement. There are many men who have the poetic instinct within them who never wrote a line of verse; that is to say, there are many men who in their own minds can make the commonplace seem beautiful, who can weave a fair network of imagery around the most ordinary things, and to whom the "meanest flower that blows can bring thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," but who have been denied the gift of clothing their thoughts in fitting language, and so communicating them to others. Many people have an exquisitely fine sense of harmony, and are stirred to the very depths of their being by good music, but it is only very rarely that a Patti or a Paderewski is given to the world. It is customary to reserve the title of poet for those who not only have the real poetic instinct but who are also able to give expression to it in the language it demands, and I claim for Holmes a place amongst the number of these. Again, even when a writer has made good his title to be called a poet, it does not follow that all the verse he writes must be true poetry. Holmes wrote an abundance of verse, but only in a comparatively small proportion of it does his poetic genius appear. Like others of his fellow-poets, he was fully conscious of the inequality of his work, and even of his inability to express in words at all some of his finest conceptions. When in 1862 he brought out a fresh volume of poems, he prefaced it with the following lines amongst others:

M

Deal gently with us, ye who read, Our largest hope is unfulfilled; The promise still outruns the deed— The tower, but not the spire, we build.

Our whitest pearl we never find, Our ripest fruit we never reach; The flowering moments of the mind Drop half their petals in our speech.

These are my blossoms; if they wear
One streak of morn or evening's glow,
Accept them; but to me more fair
The buds of song that never blow.

By common consent Holmes reaches the high-water mark of his genius in his two lyrics entitled the "Chambered Nautilus" and "The Last Leaf." When the former appeared, Whittier spoke of it as being "booked for immortality," and there is little doubt that it will live and be loved long after much that its author wrote has passed into oblivion. For purity of conception and beauty of expression it is unsurpassed. The chambered nautilus is a species of shell fish, its peculiarity being that each year it builds for itself a new, larger, and more pearly shell. After describing this process in exquisite language, the poet continues:

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee, Child of the wandering sea, Cast from her lap, forlorn!

From thy dead lips a clearer note is born Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn,

While on mine ear it rings,

Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul, As the swift seasons roll!

Leave thy low-vaulted past!

Let each new temple, nobler than the last, Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast, Till thou at length art free,

Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

Tennyson has expressed the same idea by a different figure, but even he does not strike a finer chord when he speaks of men rising as by "stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things."

Holmes was a poet of occasion, and for many years no important celebration in Boston was complete without a poem from his pen, and all the great national events which occurred during his lifetime he has recorded in delightful verse. On a fixed day in every year, from 1851 to almost the end of his life, the members of the College class which he had attended in 1829 met and dined together, and Holmes never failed to treat his old classmates to a poem appropriate to the occasion. These meetings called forth many of his happiest verses. Latterly the number of these old comrades grew small, and when there was not a head round the table but had been touched by the hoary finger of time, to the poet they were still the "boys of '20." It was frequently his duty to sing the dirge of some one who, since their last meeting, had been called to his account, and no man ever handled the virtues and frailties of a departed brother more tenderly than he.

Nor was Holmes wanting in poetic fire when the theme of his song called for it. He was an American to the backbone, and gloried in his country's independence. The stars and stripes of his nation's flag inspired him on many an occasion, and his songs of freedom have the true patriotic ring about them.

Empire unsceptred! What foe shall assail thee, Bearing the standard of Liberty's van? Think not the God of thy fathers shall fail thee, Striving with men for the birthright of man! Up with our banner bright, Sprinkled with starry light,

Spread its fair emblems from mountain to shore.

While through the sounding sky

Loud rings the nation's cry—

Union and Liberty! One evermore!

Having given as the subject of this paper the name of Holmes only, I need offer no apology for dealing with him alone. In treating of some authors it is necessary to a right understanding of their merits and position to consider at length the state of literature at the time they lived. This, however, applies in a very modified degree in the case of an American writer, the literature of that country having advanced but little beyond its infancy. In spite of this, or possibly on account of it, such occasions are not infrequently made the excuse for the drawing of a quite unfair comparison between the literature of that country and our own. If the result were to make us more thankful for our inestimable birthright as Englishmen, and more ready to take advantage of the privileges that are ours in belonging to a nation with a literature that is second to none, such a comparison might not be in vain; but, unfortunately, it often ends in an unreasoning conceit on our part, and in our putting too low an estimate upon the literature of our sister country across the water. I am conscious that I am here treading upon delicate ground, and I shall content myself with only saying further that a nation of the age of America need have no fear for her literary reputation either now or in the days that are to come while she can point to such names as those of Emerson, Longfellow, Irving, Hawthorne, Lowell, and Holmes, and say, "These are my sons."

In conclusion, I do not claim for Holmes that he was a great writer in the sense in which that word is usually employed. Shakespeare was great: a genius such as his is given to a nation only once in its history. As poet and dramatist, interpreter of human emotions and passions, he is admittedly without rival. Dr. Johnson was great; by his ponderous works and sturdy championship of literature as a profession his life marked an epoch in the literary history of the country. Scott was great; by the touch of his magic pen he made the dry bones of longdead kings and warriors live again, and wove the most fascinating romances in our language out of the country side legends of his native Scotland. These men, and such as these are deservedly called great, and their names will be handed down from age to age and from generation to generation long after we have passed into the silent land. But does not that very fact seem to remove them to a distance from us, and is there not a certain coldness in their very greatness? Holmes' sphere is, if I may use the expression, at the fireside, and when we take one of his volumes from the shelf we instinctively draw up cur chairs to the fire and prepare for genial converse. He has something to say to us in our every mood and herein lies the secret of the love we bear him. On being asked on one occasion whether he derived more satisfaction from having written his "Treatise on Puerperal Fever," which had been the means of preventing much human suffering and saving human life, or from having written the "Chambered Nautilus," he said: "There is more selfish pleasure to be had out of the poem--perhaps the nobler satisfaction from the life-saving labour." We may take this reply as characteristic of Holmes' attitude generally towards his medical as compared with his literary work. But posterity may well take a broader view of the matter. Medical science advances with rapid strides, and the contributions made to it by Holmes may at any time be superseded by still more important discoveries. But charity, sympathy, brotherly kindness, cures for the troubles of mind and heart which are so prominent a feature of his writings, are the same in all time, and will be as efficacious a hundred years hence as they are to-day. It is men possessed of such virtues that the world needs, for it is they who most surely hasten the coming of

The one, far off, divine event, To which the whole creation moves.





OLD MALABAR, JUGGLER AND ACROBAT.

BY WILLIAM DINSMORE.

From his native hills

He wander'd far; much did he see of men—

Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,

Their passions and their failings.

—Wordsworth.

MALABAR was the most popular acrobat of his day. He was a familiar figure at all the race meetings and in the principal towns and cities in Great Britain. I first saw him perform at Glasgow Fair in the year 1838. The last time I saw him he was performing his oft-repeated exhibitions of juggling and feats of strength in Norfolk Street, Brown Street, Manchester. His modest manner and his dexterity interested me, and the foreign name — Malabar — inscribed on his waist-belt seemed to invest him with an air of mystery and romance. I am not possessed with that affected wisdom which prompts inartistic-minded persons to look down on art occupations which they deem useless. Therefore, I like the honest showman's art. The old juggler always seemed contented and happy.

I almost envied his lot spent in easy and interesting journeys, halting to perform in quiet villages, anon performing in busy towns, gladdened by the delight and applause of children, animated by the smiles of the fair sex, and supported by the contributions of his admirers. Householders and heads of families might envy such a lot as Malabar's. He was free from anxieties respecting house rent, increase of taxes, accumulation of rates, tradesmen's bills, servants' caprices, and the cost and the care of bringing up a family never troubled him. As he wandered among rural scenes, basking in sunshine, or resting in shade, he could snap his fingers at Misfortune and set her at defiance; her frown could not daunt him. He was blessed with infancy of heart, gifted with a genial nature, and favoured with a constitution sound as a vigorous oak tree strengthened by bright sunshine and invigorated by The changes in fashion of male attire did not trouble him. The latest sheet of tailor's patterns just received from Paris, was as uninteresting to him as a sheet of blank paper. His simple attire-dark blue blouse, knickerbockers, long stockings, and strong shoes-was the fashion of his choice, and sufficed him for the morning costume and evening dress. He was not expected to don mourning habiliments, and he was not solicited for a vote of any kind. Nearly all his long life he arranged his own show, independent of the rule or the caprice of any manager. Malabar could sit in his lodgings at night and calmly listen to actors complain of their trouble under the manager's sway. He could hearken unmoved while distressed actors related how their manager raged during a final rehearsal of a new piece, because the leading actors were not letter perfect in their part, and in consequence of this remissness and other shortcomings there ensued a violent hurricane of profanity from all points of the theatrical compass.

The old acrobat never forgot his part; he never required prompting. The effect of study and wearisome repetition of a character, which operates upon the memory of some performers in an extraordinary manner, ending in forgetfulness of almost every line of their part, was unknown to him. Malabar possessed a "wingy nature" of mind and freedom of movement of body, he was as free as the unrestrained wind to roam at will without let or hindrance. In addition to the name on his waist-belt he might have added the words Art and Liberty as his motto, or he might have chosen John Selden's motto, "Above all things, Liberty." For forty years he was spared even the trouble of looking after his show properties; his devoted wife and constant companion took charge of the apparatus, and during the performance arranged the articles and handed them to him in proper order.

He performed without the aid of musical attraction; he was independent of face-painting, which many of his profession require to conceal the ravages of dissipation or to hide the impress which time, with heavy hand, marks on the street performer's visage. For a long time I was puzzled anent the origin of the name inscribed on the old equilibrist's belt. I fancied that perhaps he had won a large sum of money on a horse named Malabar, and in honour of the lucky event had adopted this name. Betting men sometimes have odd ways of perpetuating the names of their favourite horses. The old acrobat's real name was Patrick Feeney. His father was a farmer in County Sligo, and Pat was born on the 20th February, 1800. At school he was a slow scholar, and when he expressed a desire to see the world and start life on his own account, his brothers provided him with thirty shillings to begin with, so he cut his stick and greased his shoes, and off he went to Dublin. There he found scanty 262

employment, and his cash dwindled down to a shilling. Thinking he might find constant employment in England, he worked his passage in a small vessel bound for Liverpool. Shortly after landing there he witnessed the performance of Tusany, a Chinese juggler. Feeney was charmed with this exhibition, and he followed the performer about the streets until dusk. Without money and without friends, the wandering boy was obliged to sleep in a shed near the docks. Next day he saw the Chinese perform. The boy, faint with hunger and cold, asked permission to carry the juggler's apparatus, and thereby obtain refreshment. This proposal was accepted, and Feeney became a servant to "Tusany," and afterwards his co-adjutor. The Chinese named the boy Malabar, and provided him with food and lodgings for his services. After a few years' servitude Malabar started business in Scotland on his own account. Scotia and its people had charms for him, and although he travelled from John o' Groats to Land's End, he preferred to roam mostly in the "Land o' Cakes." The Scottish people admired him for his geniality, and applauded his tricks of skill and feats of agility and strength. He attracted attention by his peculiar dress, tall and powerful build, and his strongly-marked features. His deportment was manly and graceful, he pattered in a modest manner, and his discourse had a blend of quiet humour. The principal items in his programme were turning somersaults, balancing a heavy coach-wheel on his chin, Japanese top-spinning, juggling with brass balls, rings, and daggers, throwing a brass ball to a great height in the air and cleverly catching it in a metal cup strapped on his forehead, the sensational trick of throwing a heavy cannon ball high in the air which he caught on the back of his neck, and the amusing feat of balancing an ass fastened on a ladder. Before he elevated his four-legged co-adjutor Malabar exclaimed:

"Tuppence more, ladies an' gentlemen, an' up goes the donkey." He said he originated this well-known phrase, which Waugh adopted as a heading to Chapter II. of his "Besom Ben Stories." When Malabar's patient four-legged companion died, he placed a big boy on the ladder, and as he elevated him the old humourist quaintly said: "I'll give this boy a rise in the world."

The veteran acrobat usually finished his performance by exclaiming, "Now then, old slack-breeches;" after this reminder he threw a somersault on his well-worn carpet. There seemed to some juvenile minds to be magic in the very web of this old bit of fabric, and young hearts throbbed quickly as he spread it out, like a prelude to his entertainment.

Malabar possessed a remarkably strong constitution, which he preserved by temperate habits. His occasional tipple was mild ale; once in his lifetime he partook of a glass of whisky punch. The bewildering effects of this draught of hot liquor caused him to miss catching the brass ball in the cup fastened on his forehead, and this was the only slip he had in the course of his professional career. Like many of his craft, he delighted to speak of his special engagements. He often narrated he had performed before kings, dukes, knights, and squires by request, and he rejoiced in describing how he balanced his donkey before George IV. at Ascot, by command of His Majesty. He told, with a degree of pride, that he had performed on the stage of the Theatre Royal, formerly in Fountain Street, Manchester. He also prided himself on his appearance in Boucicault's drama, entitled "The Flying Scud," produced at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, and he affirmed that his appearance in the racecourse scene gave it due and proper effect. His last performance was given on the streets of Glasgow on the 5th of November, 1883. There he was in the foul weather—old Malabar, indeed—striving to pick up a living, very old, yet resolute, age covering his head with reverence, patient and light-hearted, cracking his simple jokes after the manner of his race, whose humour often bubbles up even when the inevitable has struck the final blow.

At noon of this dreary November night, the 5th, the invisible and invincible one of mightiest power silently entered the old performer's bed-chamber, and smote him once, gently-no struggling, no wrestling in this encounter. The invincible did not maliciously hover about his victim or torture him by long and weary suffering. Thus the oncefamiliar form of the old entertainer for ever disappeared from the streets of Saint Mungo City. In the mirk and gloomy night, no star or moon revealed, he who had entertained two generations of Caledonians passed. On the 6th of November the once-powerful frame of the aged acrobat lay stark and motionless, a worn-out shackle that his immortal part had laid aside. Several of Malabar's friends in Glasgow considered that a memorial stone ought to be raised to mark where his mortal remains are laid. desire indicates that he bore a good character.

He worked out the problem of life gently and cheerfully. The venerableness of his age and his virtues confer a degree of reverence on his memory. Thus musing, many an honest Scot may unbonnet in remembrance of him and say "Rest in Peace—Rest."





ALFRED THE GREAT.

BY JAMES T. FOARD.

OCTOBER next will close a record of a thousand years in our island story. In that month a thousand years ago, Alfred, the King of the West Saxons, laid himself down to rest. He is the one monarch in our history styled the Great. His contemporaries declared him the father and the darling of his people. England's darling. The Elizabethans nominated him Great. Why was he great? In what did his greatness consist? Is the epithet rightly applied or misapplied? He was a successful soldier king, confessedly a warrior, no mythical or fabulous hero, like Hercules or Achilles, Sampson or Ajax; who did not himself claim, like Anthony or Cæsar, descent from the antique Gods, though he was of Cedric's line, but was simply a pious, sensible God-fearing West Saxon, who voluntarily bowed his head and shaped his shoulders to the ceaseless pressure of the iron yoke of duty, and, as I propose to suggest, was the real maker and founder of England. He was monarch by birth and election, and his office—or mission, if you prefer that word was to weld the mixed Scandinavian, Teutonic, Jutish, and Anglian peoples into one nation and into one kingdom. to be known hereafter honourably as England.

He was great, I shall submit, in very deed. In prowess, patience, persistence, policy and piety, in his purposes and in his practice—a monarch who honoured his kingship, who justified the accident of his birth—a ruler of true imperialism, who governed with love in the hearts of his people; a leader who led his countrymen through their highest instincts, and with the noblest aspirations of their race, and who in his person embodied their then and subsequent ideals.

He found his nominal kingdom divided against itself, captive, dishonoured, dismembered, and broken—in truth, in fragments and little more than a name; he left it united, homogeneous, strong for purposes of power, peace and perpetuity, internal safety, and external concord.

Before his death in 900 or 901 he had fused its discordant elements, ended its schisms, converted it to Christianity, and left a united people, with united interests, God-fearing, laborious, and with a kingdom to honour and sustain.

Egbert, his valiant grandfather and predecessor on the throne, had, by his military prowess and success in battle, laid the stones of a practicable West Saxon dominion, but died before he was able to reduce the territory he had conquered under control, or cement it by central authority into a nation. Ethelwolf, the father of Alfred, a pious and soldierly prince, did little, with his eldest son in rebellion and dividing his regality, to consolidate his kingdom. When Alfred, his youngest and fifth son, succeeded his elder brother Ethelred in 871 the Danes, who had first appeared in our island some forty years before, by their annual freebooting expeditions were practically the rulers and masters of the greater part of the country, and levied tribute on all sides. Between 860 and 868 almost every shire and hundred had been devastated. All the monasteries and abbies which had been founded and established

during the preceding reigns by the piety of the Saxons, Lindisfarne, Croyland, Tynemouth, Ely, Medeshampton, Bardsley, Coldington, were burned or rased to the ground, and their monks and servants had been slaughtered and put to the sword, the ruthless invaders, if the monkish historians are to be believed, sparing neither age nor sex, infancy nor infirmity. They had levied tribute in Mercia, and finally, some three years later, had driven out its king and annexed his kingdom. They had secured possession of nearly all the country north of Somerset, and a great part of Wessex, to the Welsh border, excluding Cornwall, and were also masters of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, and part of Berkshire, with a settlement at Reading, which they fortified, and another in the south-west, at Exeter. Theoretically, the crown of Wessex included the Government of Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Gloucestershire, and so much of Devonshire as lay east of Totness and Bideford; but almost every province and district enumerated had been overrun and laid waste, as well as parts of Surrey and Kent, the incursions and ravages of the invaders for several years after Alfred came to the throne becoming each year bolder, more predatory, and disastrous.

Under these circumstances, for many years, and until the crowning victory of Ethandune, or Edington, in Wiltshire, in 878, Alfred's life might be described as one of all but unceasing warfare, fighting as many as nine pitched battles, according to the Saxon chronicle, in the year he succeeded to the throne, and with varying fortune and results, and this in spite of ill-health and infirmity of constitution. He was assailed on all sides, and his sovereignty was a bare struggle for existence. His mobile foe, recruited each year from the North, attacked in all directions. They overrun all East Anglia and beheaded Edmund, its king. They

penetrated to Ashdown, near Reading, in Wessex, and to Ethandune, in Wiltshire, and Merton, in Oxfordshire. During the next six years he had to encounter them with various fortune both by sea and land on the coasts of Hampshire and Devon, and at Wareham and Exeter. Practically, it may be said that all East Anglia, Mercia, and a great part of Northumbria as well as of Wessex, fell under the enemy's dominion, Alfred being content to buy off the intruders, and, by paying tribute, bind them by what proved after to be only illusory oaths.

For seven weary years the Fates frowned dismally on the young King. It was, according to Asser, in the early part of the year 878 that his fortunes reached their lowest ebb. Then, deserted by his army and followers, his kingdom was bounded within two small acres of morass. Here, in the place, or, as it was termed, the island of Athelney, surrounded by marshes, occurred the incident recounted by nearly all the chroniclers, of his hiding almost unattended, and his sheltering in swineherd's hut. This was about Easter, and here followed one of those strange revolutions of fortune that affirm the proverb, "'Tis always the darkest, the hour before day." Within a few months-indeed, by the end of May-he was able to rally about him nobles and subjects, summon an army to the field, and was also in a condition to try conclusions with his inveterate foes, for once with overwhelming success. He met them, as has been already indicated, on the confines of the forest of Selwood, at Ethandune, near Westbury, in Wiltshire, and near Brixton, or Egbert's Stone, and secured on one fateful day, and, as it would appear, by one desperate and despairing effort, such a triumph as changed the whole tenour of his life, and secured him that foothold which enabled him to march onwards to his supremacy and Imperial rule.

It were difficult to say whether he attained success in his people's eyes because he succeeded, or because he for the first time deserved and conquered fortune, and that his trials and experiences had changed and modified the purport of his existence. The point is left in too much obscurity to be fathomed. It is certain that afterwards he pursued a career which from afar appears one of unbroken success. He soon after, in July, induced Guthrum, the Danish king, to become Christian, and entered into a treaty of peace with him at Wedmore, known as the treaty of Wedmore, which must be considered the basis of Alfred's regality. From this time must, be dated his efforts to consolidate his kingdom and win the love and confidence of his people, to maintain the law, and, if possible, to secure peace and order within his dominion. By the peace, the outline of his new kingdom of Wessex was defined. Its confines, as ratified by the treaty which still exists, were: "From the mouth of the Thames up to the River Lea, then to the source of the Lea following the river boundary, through Middlesex and Hertfordshire past Luton, and so on to Bedford; then striking sharply to the east past Huntingdon and St Ives and Ely, on, still east, to King's Lynn, on the north coast of Norfolk, and thence on by Watling Street and the Ouse."* The capital of West Saxony was Winchester, and I have already indicated the nominal extent of the kingdom when Alfred began his reign. By this treaty of July, 878, he acquired the command of Western Mercia, and by his subsequent defeat of Guthrum, who rebelled in 802, temporary rule in East Anglia. He appointed his son-in-law as Ealdorman of Mercia, he being the suzerain or overlord. At the same time he granted its people local government and internal control and independence. Practically, he was able soon after

^{*} Spelman, p. 67.

to annex South Saxony, Essex, and the rest of Mercia, laying the foundations of a kingdom undreamed of by his predecessors, absorbing the various peoples of the Octarchy, he being the recognised overlord and ruler in Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumberland, east to the German Ocean, west to Weymouth, and on the south to Ramsgate and Deal, and from south to north from Brixham to Berwick, and from Newhaven to Northumberland.

When, finally, he attained peace and secured respite from the invaders of his realm, constitutional government became for the first time practicable. His sovereignty was comprised of petty Principalities, of different races and nationality, of alien birth and alien faith, Angles, Norwegians, Jutes, Saxons and Danes, with little in common save their predatory instincts and a general distaste for all authority or government save in time of war, the tendency of the Teutonic mind, as we know from Tacitus, being one of revolt against all rule save military leadership. With a certain settled domesticity, deference to women, and homage for social superiority, they held a vehement inclination to so-called independence and individualism. Their idea of government was limited to family control and petty chieftainship. It was much the same as we see it in a primitive and almost unchanged form in the Boer organisation of to-day. Every man desired to be his one and only governor, and was hostile to any invasion of his personal rights except under the pressure of immediate necessity, being unwilling to make any sacrifice even for personal security or the common good. The confines of a man's own land or garden were with him the boundary of empire. He was content if his capital was a village, his cities collections of huts, and his leader in time of war the Ealdorman or Dux of his county. A social and municipal authority being sufficient, as it prevailed in the petty Dukedoms in Germany almost to our own time.

With such discordant elements, with no long or uninterrupted period of peace during his reign, and from so inauspicious a starting-point, after the wasting devastations of years, it has been a problem with all historians how Alfred contrived to develop so magnificently during his reign the resources of his kingdom. The repeated and organised attacks of the Viking Hastings, a most powerful leader, towards the close of his reign, in combination with the Northumbrians, and his own countrymen in the east and north-eastern counties, and in alliance with the Welsh, and their almost simultaneous incursions in Essex, Surrey, East Anglia, Kent, Devonshire, and in the Wirral peninsula, as well as in the confines of Cornwall, which were all in turn successfully encountered, attest the extraordinary vitality and resource and the amazing completeness of the internal administration of the Saxon King. He was attacked in the Bristol Channel, at Exeter, at Farnham, on the borders of Essex, and in the Isle of Sheppey, in the same year, and was able, by the various and skilful disposition of his local forces and followers, and by the volunteer aid of his subjects to his main army, to achieve victory in all his encounters.

With these external difficulties to surmount, the ideal of his kingly duty, to consolidate his kingdom, and to advance his people in knowledge and in all the arts of peace, seems never to have deserted him. In his writings and in his translation of Boethius he has expressed his views of the idea of politic and representative government as he understood them, concluding with the declaration: "This I can now truly say, that so long as I have lived I have striven to live worthily, and after my death to leave my memory to my descendants in good works" This,

indeed, seems to have been the sum of his sense, of the high obligation of kingship. He desired no conquests save over his own desires; he manifested no ambition save that of being the worthy exponent of the best instincts of his own people-to be their agent and attorney, so to speak, rather than their controller, their prolocutor rather than their ruler, their shepherd and friend rather than their monarch. The government he thus inaugurated, put into modern phraseology, was a government of the people by the people, for the people—the preservation of a regal or Imperial peace for which the ruler was responsible, with a settled government of law and confirmed concord throughout his dominion. This was his ideal of that law and order which his descendants have been so often derided for worshipping. This was the absorbing and inextinguishable purpose and abiding pursuit of his life. If the chronicles are to be believed, he made sacrifices to this end. He hanged, says Andrew Horne in his quaint language* in the "Miroir des Justices," 44 judges in one year for their false judgments, and, we may perhaps add, he began at the right end, and also suggest that law thus prevailed and order was maintained.

Having overcome these initial difficulties, or some of them, in the administration of justice, we are free to follow the monarch in his pursuit of constitutional government, and in that conscientious, exacting, and unceasing, even tireless round of duty, he prescribed himself as due to his kingship, and which, by him initiated, was consecrated in so beautiful a form in the life of our late ever revered Sovereign, his descendant.

We are all of us, of necessity, dependent more or less

Il pendist Darling pur ceo que il avoit Judge Sidulf a la mort pur la rettreit de Edulfe son fits, que puis l'acquit del fait principal. Il pendist Segnar, etc.

for our views of history on some recognised or nominal authority. Hume, Macaulay, Froude, Carlyle, have in their turns had much to answer for. Their prejudices, leanings, inaccuracies, and foibles have misled many men. Unluckily for us, Professor Freeman, a master of style, fluent, fervent, picturesque, aggressive, positive, and inaccurate, took in hand the Anglo-Saxon people. Under his guidance many modern students have been taught to regard several of Alfred's merits as more or less mythical. As a superior person the professor discovered that poor, frail humanity "had strangely misconceived Alfred's historic position." This is the Academic manner. It is so infallibly wise. The poor world, which is not enlightened, believed Alfred to be great, called him Great, and endowed him with many virtues, some of them possibly Apocryphal; but in the main, I submit, had formed a most accurate and comprehensive view of his true nobility of soul. Asser, his friend and biographer, in various passages in his life, testifies in his favour:

"That his noble nature implanted in him from his cradle a love of wisdom above all things," and that he was affable and pleasant to all, liberal in his largess, and curiously eager to investigate things unknown; moreover, that in spite of the terrible malady which incessantly tormented him from the 20th to the 40th year of his life, his constant wars, his daily infirmities of body and suffering, and the invasions of the Pagans, he ceaselessly devoted himself to the internal development of his kingdom. He taught his workers in gold and silver, and his artificers of all kinds to build houses majestic and good beyond the precedent of his ancestors, and encouraged them to pursue their mechanical inventions, and also to devote themselves to the improvement of the Saxon tongue, to recite the Saxon poems, and to make others learn them, and he never desisted from studying most diligently to the best of his ability.

On this theme, therefore, I prefer the evidence of his contemporary to that of Mr. Freeman.: "I will take the

ghost's words for a thousand pounds." The conclusion I have arrived at by careful study of the Warrior's life is that we are much more indebted to him than we are aware, or than has ever been acknowledged or known. We owe to him some of our noblest political privileges, as well as many of the most valuable safeguards of our national freedom. That he did not primitively found Oxford as a University may perhaps be conceded, but, even if we discredit Asser as to Grimbauld's mission on the point, his generous endowment of all of its religious and scholastic institutions suggests that he was its earliest and most substantial patron. Sir John Spelman, his most accurate biographer, has said that in his foundation of the greater, lesser, and little halls of the University, he was not merely the founder, but the first author of the name University.

We are certainly indebted to him for his most Royal virtues, his magnanimity, his virtueus and pious example, his lofty sense of duty, his disciplined self-sacrifice for the benefit of his people, his inextinguishable love of learning, his generosity to foreigners and scholars, his reverence for the sanctity of national honour, and his overpowering sense of justice. He bore the standard of the dignity and elevation of man forth into space, and planted it there. He established an ideal of kingship, as was afterwards manifested in Henry the Fifth, and in the same spirit of reliance on Heaven in just causes,* which remains as an imperishable example to his successors. What, then, do I claim for the first King of all England.

1st.—That he was a great and pious ruler, and literally a father to his people.

^{*&}quot;Oh God, Thy arm was here;
And not to us, but to Thy arm alone
Ascribe we all."

-"Henry V.," Act 4, Sc. 8, 1. 112.

2nd.—That he was a truly Imperial constitutional King, a King in very deed by reason of his valour, virtue, and political resource; that he was a most sound and sagacious legislator and law giver; that his explanation annexed to his code; "that he had gathered together the laws which the forefathers of his people held, and those which seemed to him to be good he submitted to his witan, to reject the bad, and that he durst not venture to set down much of his own, and that his witan selected and confirmed them, and said that it seemed good to them to be holden," sufficiently indicate his view that the wants of his people were to be the fountain of law, and that they were to be its makers and creators, and that his monarchy was ministerial and judicial, and not absolute.

3rd.—That his legal institutions were conceived in the happiest spirit of intuitive legislation. He was the founder of the common law; he initiated trial by a man's peers, or what is now known as trial by jury; his suggestions for the protection and privileges of strangers and merchants were incorporated in Magna Charta; his regulations as to the change of property by sale in market overt; his division of the country into shires, ridings, hundreds, and tithings, though not originated by him wholly, as there were shires and Ealdorman before his day, was a disposition made effectual by his prevision and foresight; and that his definitions of burglary and contrivances for securing the sanctity and privilege of a man's house, as a castle for his safety, as well as for his repose, and his distinctions between manslaughter or wilful and accidental homicide in their inception, were the basis of the modern law. Pre-eminently, and placed in the forefront of his dooms, was his attempt to emphasize and establish the sentiment of national honour, and the solemnity to be attached to all oaths and pledges, and the obligation that every man's word should be his bond, these provisions, one and all, being devised in the highest spirit of sagacity. In addition, the institution of Frankpledge, by which the head of a family was answerable for the good conduct, peacefulness, and sobriety of his household and neighbours, and which Sir John Spelman regretted had in his day and during the civil wars of York and Lancaster declined, and which is perpetuated in our system of sureties for good behaviour, and in cases of breach of the peace, was marked by great foresight and political wisdom.

4th.—That his triumphal defence of his kingdom between 893 and 897 proved abundantly his skill and resource as an exemplary administrator and organiser. In this period he had, under the leadership of the redoubtable Hastings, been assailed on all sides. But during the comparative respite he had enjoyed of fifteen years he had created and organised, being also its founder, a national navy, as well as a complete system of internal defence, which proved him a statesman as much as a soldier. His fiscal arrangements and his levies for the erection and repair of bridges, of forts in all exposed situations and highways, and his establishment of free boroughs, were the devices of a great co-ordinating mind. Many institutions which we now enjoy, although devised, were not perfected by him. They developed and grew. He did not make the tree; he planted the acorn, and it became a noble oak and a possession to after ages.

5th.—That his virtues as a civil administrator thus exemplified were not less meritorious and exceptional than his military exploits in rescuing his country in its hours of direst distress and humiliation. He was wise, patient, submissive, and magnanimous in prosperity as in adversity; he was a most liberal patron of all the arts; he was the friend of all scholars and learned men; he was hospitable

and generous to all foreigners and merchants; while his endowment of all kinds of religious and scholastic edifices, abbeys, churches, schools, and seats of learning amply attest that enthusiasm for wisdom, spiritual and moral, that Asser suggested. His rebuilding of London after its sack and pillage, his charters to free towns and vills, and his encouragement of guilds, being all evidences of the same comprehensive and far-reaching mind.

To briefly explain the scheme of frankpledge, as a means for the maintenance of internal order and peace, it may be described as a plan of obligatory mutual suretyship. To ensure this, it was compulsory on every citizen to become a member of an established community. So rigidly was this law enforced that every guest or visitor, for more than ten days in residence, was constituted a member of the family with whom he stayed, who became responsible for his morals and manners, in purse and person. Sir John Spelman, the son of the great patriot and antiquary, in the 17th century, as I have already said, deplored the decline of this bond of union, and the absence of the courts leet attending it, and which were the administrative courts of justice of these free communities. These leets were composed of the citizens, and were presided over by one of their body and of their self-governing organisation. The function of these leets was to inquire into all abuses of law and order affecting the Commonwealth. They sat in judgment on offences against morals and manners, as well as those pertaining strictly to law. Thus they took cognisance of all kinds of nuisances, slanders, tale-bearing, drunkenness, infidelity of husbands, scolding wives, neglect of children, of manure heaps, frauds in the sale of bread, meat, and beer, short weight, and generally all deceits in trading and in the sale and retailing of goods, and of breaches of social peace in these primitive communities. In constitution they were as simple as the parish vestry or our parish councils are as now constituted, every resident householder being a member. Their executive officer was the borsholder, headborough, or chief constable, he acting as chairman of the executive and as controller during his term of office, and being elected by the voice and vote of the other members of the leet.

Over these leets there were again hundred courts, with a larger criminal jurisdiction, dealing with a more serious class of offence, and with more ample powers of prohibition and punishment. In command of these there were again county courts exercising a civil and criminal as well as an equitable jurisdiction, and presided over by the Ealdorman, or ruling member of the county, and the Bishop, the chief men respectively in their shire.

Prior to Alfred's reign the laws, it must be understood, were of extreme simplicity, the rule of the strongest being the chief controlling force. The enactments and penalties inflicted to maintain something like order consisted almost wholly of pecuniary fines, levied as compensation, as bot or boot, or equivalent for the wrong done. These were payments to the injured or their family, and under these every trespass or injury had an assessed value or specified price. Thus, the maiming of a man's eye, tongue, tooth, nose, ribs, ear, fingers, was estimated and covered by a prescribed sum. This legislation presumedly was intended to control the private right of revenge which in a warlike community was but too likely to be resorted to. In the laws of Alfred, for the first time, we find that in addition to the bot or blood recompense, a fine was payable to the King for the breach of that settled amity enjoined by the ruler, and which he had made himself answerable for as "the King's peace." Thus in a case of homicide, the relatives or dependants of the man slain were paid, in the case of a man of superior degree, known as a twelve hynde man, a wer of 1,200 shillings, and in that of a two hynde man 200 shillings, the offender being also bound to give full security to the kinsmen, and within twelve days pay 1,200 shillings for the breach of the King's peace. And in injuries to property, as burning trees, he had to pay the owner of the tree 5 shillings, and to the King 30 shillings as ransom, and in cases of ordinary theft the same rule held, the King claiming a fine for the breach of his authority, for which the goods of the thief were answerable, in addition to the restitutory fine to the person wronged.

It is not to be assumed that Alfred's laws were in other respects greatly in advance of those of his predecessors. Laws to be effectual must grow and be developed rather than contrived. As he has told us, they were a compilation of the best of those of his progenitors, Ethelbirght, Hlothaire and Eadric, Withraed and Ina, his kinsman. But the code of Alfred was more comprehensive, containing provisions against kidnapping and selling children to slavery, cruelty to slaves, outrages on women consecrated to a holy life, as nuns, accidental homicide, adultery, fighting in the King's hall or court of justice, violation of the sanctity of a man's home by night, it being to him, in the words of the Elizabethan lawyers, "his castle and fortress, as well for his defence against injury and violence as for his repose," the consequences of which were that a man might kill the invader of his peace by night without rendering himself criminally liable for homicide. These were some of the various changes and innovations introduced. They comprehended, however, breaches of trust, necromancy, unnatural crimes, tale-bearing and slander, batteries and assaults, the maladministration of justice and worship of false gods, usury, outrages upon children, riots in the folk mote, recklessness in the use and conduct of weapons, etc., and formed, indeed, the first rude effort of codification, which is but a dream with us to-day.

I have but roughly indicated some of the changes wrought in our institutions by the sagacity and prevision of the King. It has been, as I think, heedlessly stated by an eminent and learned professor of law that Alfred was not a legal reformer. With this I do not acquiese even remotely. He did not undertake any violent reform or change. He proposed only to adopt and simplify, but, as I have already indicated, he infused new principles and a humanising and more merciful spirit than was existent before. Thus, without suppressing the old blood feud for homicide, he modified the terms by which it was to be enforced, by providing sanctuary for the culprit, surrender of his arms and weapons, and shelter in his home for a time that he might summon his kinsmen and neighbours to his aid, if he would not place himself in mercy by surrender and paying compensation, and entering into sureties for his future good behaviour. He also punished adultery, brawling in the courts of justice, and inflicted the penalty of outlawry for contumacy, and the enforcement of sureties in cases of sale in open market.

The American Ambassador, Mr. T. F. Bayard, in the course of a lecture delivered last year in Burnley, attributed to Alfred those principles of local self-government which had laid the foundations of the American Republic, and been a means of founding that great nation. He even went so far as to say that Magna Charta embodied many of the monarch's views, and that these had also been crystallised in the American constitution.

But there is one aspect of his character which is of predominant interest—his fervency as a scholar. Like Ion, the ministering high priest of Apollo's temple—he kept the sacred fire on the altar of learning alive; he found a few ashes and blew them into flame. He was the true founder of our national literature; he consecrated the Anglo-Saxon speech; he gave us our first national history; he improved and embellished our mother tongue; he translated Boethius and the History of Paulus Orosius from the Latin, the pastorals and dialogues of St. Gregory, as well as some of the works of Bede, notably his Ecclesiastical History and the Psalms of David, besides framing a manual or Enchiridion adorned by the sayings and opinions of the learned Asser. Alfred's first inclination was towards his native poetry. He had the same heroic vein in his blood that stirred Sir Philip Sydney to say that the song of "Chevy Chase," recounting the heroism of men of his blood, even when sung by some old blind crowder in tattered weeds, stirred him more than a trumpet. The poetry he revered was rude and simple, but it was stately, and appealed directly to the patriotic and warlike enthusiasm of a kindred soul. To Alfred, according to Asser, his native poetry was a perpetual font of enjoyment. By day and night he was an assiduous listener when it was recited, and it also inspired him with immediate emulation. He became himself a versifyer, and this in spite of his early neglected education. When, as Asser has described, the future King was first able to read in his mother tongue, he found, no doubt to his dismay, that he was but in the antechambers of knowledge. All the lore and learning of antiquity were to him as a sealed book. Bede, Alcuin, Gregory, Boethius, whom he heard praised and cited on all sides, were in Latin. He had, therefore, to instruct himself in that language. That he attained some proficiency is clear from his translations. But his rendering of the "Consolations of Philosophy" of Boethius, which was no doubt a vade mecum with the clergy, his instructors, and the latest work of literary fashion of the time, as he himself has told us, was by no means literal. He took many liberties with the text, and has expanded his version with many reflections and observations of his own, especially where the author dealt with sacred subjects and the attributes and beneficence of the Deity. Many of his conclusions on false glory, the insincerity of homage and worldly esteem, the worthlessness of transmitted splendour, and of riches and power, without virtue to sustain them, seem to sound a far-off echo of the Duke's reflections in "Measure for Measure." His strong sense of sympathy with and belief in immutable justice is shown by his asseveration that God will requite all men according to their work, and that all evil should be punished in proportion to its guilt, and that every unjust punishment is the evil of him that inflicts it, not of him who suffers it. "It is an heretick that makes the fire, not he which burns in't," says our divine poet, and the King concludes that the injured are happier than those who injure them.

It must not be supposed that I desire to ascribe to Alfred a faultlessness the world ne'er saw, or even accept unreservedly, the fulsome praises of his parasites and panegyrists, who then, as now, no doubt discovered merits in a monarch they would not have descried in a subject. It seems conceivable from the testimony of Asser and the life of St. Neot, and the chronicle of Melrose, that before he settled down to his life's work after Ethandune he may have lapsed from the paths of virtue, and have surrendered himself to slothfulness and self-indulgence, as well as undue severity in his rule, although his own self-accusations and confessions, being those of a too sensitive and conscientious person, are not to be accepted literally. But in spite of the overwhelming successes and devastations of the Danes before 878, and their great victories

at Reading, Exeter, Wareham, and Chippenham, his cause, resources, and prospects would hardly have been reduced to so low an ebb as they appear to have reached if his conduct had been as exemplary and unblemished as it became after his chastening experiences in that year. No doubt the country was greatly exhausted and spent by its repeated defeats, but there is a possibility that his exacting austerity of rule, coupled with some laxity of self-indulgence on his own part, alienated his followers, and explains in part their apparent defection.* The suggestions of Asser and the monk of Croyland convey the impression that a certain laxity of character was manifested by the Monarch in his earlier years, and that this may have conduced to his first want of success and his military disasters. But in the absence of better confirmatory evidence than their's, this is mere hypothesis. Still it is not incredible that, like our national hero, Henry the Fifth, he spent part of his early manhood in folly and self-indulgence. Sir John Spelman attributed the extremity of disaster and the apparent defection of the army in 878 to seven battles fought two years before, but this seems an inaccuracy, and the biographer has confounded these with the nine battles of 871, mentioned by the Saxon chronicle. The only severe engagements in Wessex of which we have an account between that date and Ethandune being those I have indicated.

Let me draw to a conclusion, and I can hardly do so in more fitting terms than in those of the great legal commentator, Mr. Justice Blackstone, who has said: "That the mighty genius of Alfred prompted him to remodel the constitution, to rebuild it on a plan that should endure for

^{*}This is suggested by John of Wallingford, and was accepted by Mr. Sharon Turner.

ages, and out of its old discordant materials, which were heaped upon each other in a vast and rude irregularity, to form one uniform and well-connected whole." he effected by reducing the whole kingdom under one regular and gradual subordination of government, wherein each man was answerable to his immediate superior for his own conduct and that of his nearest neighbours; for to him we owe that masterpiece of judicial policy, the subdivision of England into tithings and hundreds, if not into counties, all under the influence and administration of one supreme magistrate, the King; which wise institution has been preserved for near a thousand years unchanged. learned author also points out that the Monarch moreover collected the various customs that he found dispersed in the different states of his composite Kingdom, and reduced and digested them into one uniform system, or code of laws, in his Dom Boc, or Liber Judicialis, for the use of the whole kingdom, and which was extant as late as the reign of Edward the Fourth, and formed the touchstone of our liberties in our contest with our Norman conquerors. This compilation was in truth the origin of the lex non scripta or common law, and the basis of that adoption of usage and custom, and of the conveniences, practices, and experiences of trading and mercantile life, which has made our common law so flexible and adaptable to all emergencies.

Personally, looking back over these ten centuries, Alfred's life is the one that occurs to me, as that of the first Englishman who undertook in its full significance "the white man's burden." His industry and zeal were phenomenal. He never spared himself. He seemed ever to live in the eye of his great Task Master. When we consider the multiplicity of duties he undertook, his unceasing efforts to humanize, to foster the intelligence, and cherish the

better feelings and instincts of his people, we are simply amazed. No detail of State service seemed to escape his vigilant attention. He grappled to his bosom with hooks of steel every scholar who seemed likely or able to serve as his coadjutor in his beneficent plans. Grimbald, John of Erigena, John, the monk of St. David's, the friend of Asser, Denewulf, the swineherd, whom he first educated and then made Bishop of Winchester, St. Neot, Plegmund, made Archbishop of Canterbury, Werefrith, Bishop of Worcester, who translated the "Dialogues of Pope Gregory," Ethelstan, Werewulf, all of Mercia, and many others. Asser has said, speaking of the disadvantages the King laboured under in early life: "His noble nature implanted in him from his cradle, a love of wisdom above all things, but-with shame be it spoken-he remained illiterate even till he was twelve years old." This was another of the disadvantages he repined under and had to overmaster. like so many of his trials and afflictions thrust upon him. Yet, amid all his wars—and he had to fight 56 pitched battles with the Danes-his incessant cares of office, his embassies to the Mediterranean, Rome, and furthest Iberia, he was able to build and restore towns and cities and forts, endow Abbeys and Bishoprics, and establish schools throughout his dominions. He created the cities of Abingdon, Dorchester, Shaftesbury, Winchester, and Wantage. He founded schools and Abbeys at Athelney, Shaftesbury, Middleton, Barford, Devizes, Alfreton, Wimborne; and Bishoprics at Sherborne, Oxford, and Winchester; and William of Malmesbury claimed for him that he was "a grammarian, a rhetorician, a philosopher, an historian, the prince of Saxon poetry, a musician, a geometrician, and an excellent architect," and, we may add, a mighty hunter and a warrior of unique record.

Therefore, when I pass in hurried review the self-O

sacrificing services of so many great men of his race in Aquitaine and Normandy, in India, on the continents of America and Africa, their conquests over nature and over themselves, I see behind them all; the revered figure of this imperfectly educated Saxon King as their exemplar and teacher, through all the ages. He indeed felt that life was not to be trifled away, but was to be dedicated in all humility, to his Kingly duties, and to the advancement of his people, and was to be sacrificed and offered up to just causes, honourable endeavour, virtuous enterprises, and a laudable ambition.

Well might the early Saxon chronicler write: "He was wise on his word and wary on his speech, both King and scholar, loving God's work—the wisest man that was in all England." England's herdman, England's darling, and, as we say compendiously to-day, Alfred the Great, the first anointed King of England.





HAROLD THE SAXON: A BALLAD OF SENLAC HILL.

By TINSLEY PRATT.

Where the Saxon downs look southward, at the break of an autumn day,

The alien hosts of the Norman in warlike order lay;

And glad was the sun's uprising, but bitter the tale to tell

Of the fortunes of the battle, and the carnage that befell.

There waved the pontiff's banner o'er the ranks of the Norman foe.

Borne by the hand of Toustain—the fair-haired knight of Caux;

And there rode the proud Duke William, with iron mace in hand,

With his brethren twain around him, and the flower of the Norman land;

There were the stout cross-bowmen, and the lances of Bayeux,

And the French and the Breton horsemen, and the archers of Evreux.

Then the proud heart of Duke William thus spake from his lips and said:

"Ere yon sun moves to its setting—moves over the quick and dead—

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The Norman arms shall triumph, and the Saxon churl shall yield

His crown unto my keeping upon this Senlac field;

For since the perjured Harold hath furnished him forth for fight

This day he shall feel my anger, and bow to the Norman's right!"

Thus proudly spake Duke William to one with forehead bare—

The Warrior Bishop of Bayeux, who rode in his hauberk there;

And the Churchman bowed in silence, while the ominous murmur grew,

And the word was passed for battle, and the bolts and arrows flew.

But on the opposing hill-side the hosts of Harold lay,

And many a prayer was uttered on Saint Calixtus' Day, For help to the Saxon bowstring—for despair in the feathered death—

For the might of the axe in conflict, as ever the record saith:

And gaily the banner of Harold above them floated wide Its folds to the breeze of morning, on Senlac's steep hillside.

"By the Holy Cross!" said Harold, "If God my aiding be, I'll hold this Saxon Kingdom from Norman William free, Who cometh with pomp of battle, and the heart of a ruthless foe,

To waste and slay and spare not, and to work us shame and woe:

Then late as ye slew the Sea King, who swept o'er the Northern foam

- To harry the land with Tostig—fight now for hearth and home;
- But if the hap of Fortune may nowise us bestead
- Then shall the body of Harold be found with the Saxon dead!"
- His house carles pressed around him, and the Saxon Earls were there,
- Earl Gurth, the mighty warrior, and Leofwin, named the Fair,
- And a cry went forth of menace, as they watched the moving foe,
- From the wielders of the war axe and the bearers of the how:
- Then towards these deadly trenches the alien horsemen drew,
- And loud o'er the press of battle their cries rang ever anew.
- "Now loose your arrows, bowmen!" outspake then Harold the King,
- And in the morning sunlight the feathered death took wing;
- It smote down horse and rider, it bore down squire and knight,
- And the grip of the fiend of battle held sway o'er that ceaseless fight.
- Thrice they assailed the trenches and the wattled palisade, But the deadly axe and the javelin were ever the Saxon's aid.
- Then down that hill of Senlac the shattered horsemen reel, Bloody and maimed and helpless, foredone by the Saxon steel
- While over that shield-bound phalanx the voice of Harold cried:
- "The God who ruleth kingdoms hath smitten the Norman's pride.

290 HAROLD THE SAXON: A BALLAD OF SENLAC HILL.

Behold how the foes of England are punished with bitter loss!"

And the shouts rang from the trenches, "For Harold and Holy Cross!"

Then stern grew the heart of William, and the fire flashed from his eye

When the scythe of Death swept slowly amidst his chivalry, And never, ere that day's battle, such shame had his proud heart borne,

As he watched his knights of prowess mowed down like the autumn corn.

"Shame on you, Norman bowmen! Shame on you, squire knight!

Shall the hosts of Harold triumph and count you as spoils of fight?

For this have I dight my army that the lips of the Saxon thane

May hold up the Norman prowess to scorn in his deep disdain?

Lay by, then, the sacred banner; lay by, then, the steel cross-bow,

And the lance and the tempered armour that make such goodly show;

And since your knees are limber, go now and your shames unfurl

In the suppliant words of the vanquished, for the sport of the Saxon churl!"

Full bitter the speech of William, and all his knights that heard

Feel shame in their hearts arising as he uttered the angry word:

"By the splendour of God, I'll conquer!" in bitter thought he said,

Then spurred his charger forward 'gainst the Saxon palisade.

And many a knight rode after, with vengeful eyes a-flame, To scatter the Saxon savage who covered their arms with shame:

And dire was the tale of the conflict, as they swept with mingled shout,

Towards where the Wessex Dragon waved over the far redoubt.

In the heart of the ruthless William the fox and the lion yied:

For the cross-bolt, and the arrow, and the lance had in vain been tried;

But when the day was waning the foemen were seen in flight,

And the Saxons poured from the trenches with laughter at the sight;

Then the crafty Norman leader crept up the hill again,

And the holders of the trenches dealt out their blows in vain,

For the palisades were broken, and the King, with angry frown,

Beheld his bill-men sweeping athwart the rolling down; But he cried unto his house-carles: "Hold still where the Dragon flies!"

And loud yet rang over Senlac the Saxon battle-cries.

But the Norman knights were gaining in the press of that bitter fight,

And the axemen of King Harold sank 'neath Duke William's might,

For he wheeled his mace around him, and he laid the Saxon low,

Nor could the boldest house-carle withstand his deadly blow.

292 HAROLD THE SANON: A BALLAD OF SENLAC HILL.

Alas, alas for Harold! the warrior Gurth is slain,

And Leofwin, too, lies silent, with many a Saxon thane; But Harold, still undaunted, fought on with his Saxon few, Where over them in the twilight the Dragon of Wessex flew:

And he dealt out death with his hand-stroke, and the foe knew shame and loss,

For the cries yet rang o'er Senlac, "For Harold and Holy Cross!"

Then outspake one, "The arrow! Behold, the Saxon dies!"
And the last of the sons of Godwin on the field of Senlac lies—

Yea, past the help of healing the form of Harold lay

When the sunlight faded slowly on Saint Calixtus' Day.

They tore down the golden Dragon that waved o'er his goodly head

In the radiant glow of the noontide, ere the life from his lips had fled;

And they hacked and hewed at his body, the Norman butchers then,

For the wolfish lust of the savage now ruled in the hearts of men.

But the night came over the carnage and the field of the dead was still,

And Harold and all his brave ones lay cold upon Senlac Hill.





CONCERNING SOME SELECTIONS FROM RUSKIN.

By John Mortimer.

A MONG the volumes on my book-shelves is one entitled "Selections from the writings of John Ruskin," published in 1862. I gave five shillings for it at a time when the expenditure of such a sum upon a book betokened a real and substantial interest in the author. If, in some unfortunate condition of things, I should be under the painful necessity of parting with that motley collection of literature which I am pleased to call my library, the privilege being conceded me of retaining a small selection of those books which I prize most, I should certainly include this of Ruskin's among the chosen few. No other book that I possess, save an early copy of Tennyson's "In Memoriam," shows greater signs of frequent use and handling. It is soiled, thumbed, and dog-eared, and the pages are breaking away from the faded, familiar green cover. It sadly needs pulling together by the binder's thread and might, with advantage to its appearance, be re-clothed; yet, somehow, I prefer to let it remain as it is, though tree calf or gilded vellum would not be too costly to form a cover for its contents. There is something honourably attractive in its worn, time-stained condition and general dilapidation, which restoration would destroy. It resembles those novels in the old circulating libraries, whose sullied leaves and worn-out appearance had such a charm for Charles Lamb, because they were suggestive of the thumbs of tender-hearted sempstresses and other fair sentimentafists, who had turned them over in eager perusal. Of such and other well-worn books which bear the like signs of the reader's devoted attachment he says, "Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better condition could we desire to see them in?" If you would "learn the spell"as Eliza Cook says of her love for a certain article of household furniture-it is to be found in the fact that it was through this volume that I made my first literary armchair acquaintance with Ruskin. It was compiled, as the publishers stated, for the benefit of readers to whom the principal works of the author were not easily accessible. I was of that company, and have felt, and still feel, an indebtedness to those wise publishers, for which the five shillings I paid them seems but a poor discharge.

In a general way your volume of selections is a book to be avoided, if the author is accessible in his fulness elsewhere. There is always something unsatisfactory about such compilations. At best they resemble a collection of precious stones taken from their original settings and tumbled into the drawer of a cabinet. They may be separately beautiful and attractive, but they lack something—they are unlinked. There are times, however, in the process of mental culture and the acquisition of intellectual food when half a loaf is better than no bread. If we cannot have a seat at the banquet, whether of Plato or Ruskin, and sup full with the favoured guests, one must be content, like Lazarus, to be fed with the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table. The many-volumed "Modern Painters,"

"The Stones of Venice," "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," were not to be possessed by a man who had only five shillings to spare, but here, for that sum, he was provided with choice and dainty pickings of Ruskinian pabulum, from all these and various other sources. The book in its arrangement is a model for all such compilations. It forms within its limits an index to the author's mind, giving you, under various groupings, many of his choicest pronouncements on nature, art, and social ethics. One specially interesting feature is the portrait with which it is prefaced. It is an engraving by Holl, after a painting by Richmond, and gave one a first impression of the outward presentment of the man. The attitude is contemplative, and the head is shown resting upon the right hand. It is the face of an idealist, finely - featured, broad - browed, the forehead crowned with a waving abundance of hair, with luminous, penetrative eyes beneath, and with the lines of its contour tapering downwards to a delicate curvature of chin. The mouth is mobile, and about the lips there is just the suspicion of a lurking smile. Altogether it is a highly attractive face, in which intellectual strength and delicacy are blended, the quality of delicacy appearing to prevail. It was this aspect of it which struck Crabb Robinson when he first saw Ruskin in a company which had met to consider a memorial to Wordsworth. He says: "The party was not large. The most interesting person was Ruskin, who talks well, and looks better. He has a very delicate and most gentlemanly face and manners."

Turning over the pages of this book in the effort to revive the impressions of that early acquaintance, the mental portrait obtained of the author shapes itself somewhat in this wise. Among the great Victorians who influenced one most at that time, there were three who stood out more distinctly than the rest, and these were Tennyson,

Carlyle, and Ruskin, a poet and two great prose writers. Of this Trinity, Carlyle had, in a sense, consigned the fine arts to the devil, but Ruskin presented himself as the Apostle of Beauty, or perhaps rather as a High Priest at the shrine thereof. Before his time Keats had said, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty; that is all ye know on earth and all ve need to know." The attitude of Keats, however, was, as we know, that of a brooding spirit taking a sensuous delight in all manifestations of beauty. As Matthew Arnold says, "He hovers over the tumult of life, but does not really put his hand to it." Of definitions of beauty there have been many, but with these we need not concern ourselves. It will be sufficient if we regard it as the fairest aspect of things, consistent with truth, which the world has to show in nature, art, or human relationships. Now the aspect of things is determined by the outlook, and differs in accordance with the point of view. The builder of Tennyson's "Palace of Art" had a keen perception of beauty, but the acquisition and enjoyment of it in his case was purely selfish. Ruskin had another purpose in view and another Gospel to preach. In the cultivation of beauty he began with his own nature, seeking to find out what was best in it, to this end cleansing and purifying what he called " the mirror of the soul," so that only the fairest aspects of things should be reflected there. Ideas of beauty, he says, depend on purity of mind. "The sensation of beauty," he tells us, " is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other; but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart, both for its truth and for its intensity, insomuch that even the right after-action of the intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended is dependent on the acuteness of the heart-feeling about them." This association of beauty, in its perception and expression, with the best dispositions of the heart of man, constituted the

main features of the new Gospel. If, then, in connection with this, you associate a profound and unselfish desire to promote the best interests and happiness of men by cultivating the sense of beauty in nature, art, and human relationships, combined with what Mr. Matthew Arnold calls "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world," you have, in brief, the impression one got from his book of Ruskin as an Apostle of Beauty and a critic of human life. Along with this cultivation of beauty, Ruskin, as strongly as Carlyle did, preached a gospel of work. You were not only to brood over life and take æsthetic enjoyment therefrom, but to "put your hand to it," and whatever you might find for your hand to do you must do it with all your might, following the highest instincts of your nature, and with a reverent and devout belief in God. Of the virtue of right purpose he says: "However mean or inconsiderable the act, there is something in the well-doing of it which has fellowship with the noblest forms of manly virtue; and the truth, decision, and temperance, which we reverently regard as honourable conditions of the spiritual being, have a representative or derivate influence over the works of the hand, the movements of the frame, and the action of the intellect, and as thus every action, down even to the drawing of a line or utterance of a syllable, is capable of a peculiar dignity in the manner of it, which we sometimes express by saying it is truly done (as a line or tone is true), so also it is capable of dignity still higher in the motive of it. Hence George Herbert:

A servant with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

Unlike many other preachers, Ruskin was a living exemplification of his own doctrine, as far, at any rate, as the noble use of language is concerned. Language is of the essence of all forms of art and of all human communication. Rightly considered, it is the embodiment of ideas in any form. It is not confined to human speech or literary conditions of prose or poetry. As Ruskin maintained, painting itself is a language. He says: "Painting, or art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but in itself nothing." So a true picture consists in the reflection of the artist's best powers, not only of eye and hand, but the best powers of his nature within the limits of his effort. He is a conveyer of ideas in his own language, and according to the range of these we estimate the relative value of his art.

Ruskin was himself an artist; he might have been a painter or a poet, but controlling influences made him a prose writer, and in the samples which the book before me presents he stands out as one of the greatest prose writers England has known. He painted in words as men paint on canvas, but with wider and more powerful and abiding results. Every sentence is a work of art, and exactly shaped so as to express the intended idea as lucidly as possible. And what rhythm and cadence and beauty of proportion there is in those finely-balanced utterances! Matthew Arnold thought that there was sometimes too much rhythm and cadence, and that Ruskin was trying to make prose do more than it can perfectly do, and that what he was attempting he would never, except in poetry, be able to accomplish to his own satisfaction. Whatever might be the value of that opinion, Ruskin was trying to make his prose as perfect and beautiful in its expression as was possible to him. It was word-painting in its purest form, and as a true painter mixes himself with his colours and reflects upon the canvas, not only an imitation of what he is depicting, but "something far more deeply interfused," which is the reflection of himself, so Ruskin blends his own personality with his prose—the man and the style are identical. Among the scenes of travel there is a description of the Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen, which consists of a single sentence only, but it is a long one, requiring near upon three hundred words for its evolution. In spite of its length, however, it is perfect in construction, and the reader is safely piloted through all its beautiful intricacies until he is brought sweetly and smoothly to the desired haven.

In dealing with the characteristics of nature Ruskin is revealed to us as one who

has talked with rocks and trees, And finds on misty mountain ground His own vast shadow, glory-crowned, He sees himself in all he sees,

Like a true poet and philosopher, there is for him in nature nothing great or small. He discourses with equal eloquence upon the open sky, the mysteries of clouds, and the little wayside pool in which they are reflected; a moantain is not more suggestive than the boulder upon its side, in which he finds a mountain in miniature. Was there ever anything written in the world on the lowly lichens and mosses more beautiful than this?—"Yet, as in one sense the humblest, in another they are the most honoured of the earth-children. Unfading as motionless, the worm frets them not, and the autumn wastes not; strong in lowliness, they neither blanch in heat nor pine in frost. To them, slow-fingered, constant-hearted, is entrusted the weaving of the dark eternal tapestries of the hills; to them, slow-pencilled, iris-dyed, the tender framing of their endless imagery.

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Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they share also its endurance, and while the winds of departing spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and summer dims in the parched meadow, the drooping of its cowslip-gold, far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen spots rest, star-like, upon the stone, and the gathering orange stain upon the edge of yonder western peak reflects the sunsets of a thousand years."

And now I must close the book regretfully, and without having said much that I intended to say, especially in the way of personal association and reminiscence. The wise sayings contained in it have come back to me in many scenes and circumstances, in city streets, in meditative walks in the fields or by the sea-shore, or on the tops of mountains, in picture galleries and cathedrals, and always with an illuminating influence, and in such musical forms that it seemed quite natural that one should chant the words. The book contains for me the Ruskin I like most to have in my mind's eve-an "adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic, who has given himself so prodigally. only never to the Philistines." Outside the book one was made aware of eccentricities, inconsistencies, contradictions, schemes Utopian, and theories of the pugnacious politicoeconomical order-hard to understand, and harder still to reconcile with the practical work-a-day facts of the world; but one was never made aware of any lack of sincerity, nor of any departure from the ideal he had shaped to himself of man's highest destiny. However differentiated, the influence was there, and always will be there, in the direction of things that make for righteousness.

To the lover of the English Lake-land and the literary associations thereof, Ruskin will be as closely and intimately identified with Brantwood and Coniston as Wordsworth was with Rydal Mount and Grasmere. The selec-

tions are of the Denmark Hill period, and the portrait is also of that time. One cannot help contrasting it in its hopeful brightness with one taken at Brantwood, which shows the venerable sage in his declining days seated in a garden chair, with his back bowed and his long locks and straggling beard whitened, and falling in careless order about his seamed and rugged face. In the story of the final years of his residence there one comes to a point where it is necessary to tell

How discord on the music fell And darkness on the glory.

And—presaging that period when art had lost its influence mayhap, and when the eyes were averted, not only from the landscape, but the sight of men—there is something pathetic in the picture of the Apostle of Beauty looking out from the Brantwood windows with saddened eyes, and writing such words as these:

Morning breaks, as I write, along those Coniston Fells, and the level mists, motionless and grey beneath the rose of the moorlands, veil the lower woods, and the sleeping village, and the long lawns by the lakeshore. Oh that someone had told me in my youth, when all my heart seemed to be set on these colours and clouds, that appear for a little while then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me, when the silence of lawn and wood, in the dews of morning, should be completed; and all my thoughts be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet more.



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THE SEA—THE OPEN SEA. By Laurence Clay.

Oh, for a breath of the salt, salt sea,
The swirl on the rocky coast!
Winds that have roamed both far and free!
'Tis these that can charm me most.

Winds from the moor or the hills I love,
The whisp'ring of leaves and trees;
But winds to the wave sings songs that grove
Ne'er chants to the softest breeze.

Blow, O thou wind, and the kiss of waves Impassion thee fiercely free! The dead wake not, though o'er their graves Thou dancest in maddest glee.

Wave to the wind, and wind to the wave, Dance on, be it sun or shower; Brave are the sons that roaming crave Of the sea's burr'd breast their dower.

Sharing its turmoil and daring all
That wind or that wave can reap,
Oft conquering both, at last to fall
To rest in the depths and sleep.

Tranquil their rest in thy tranquil deep,
Thy great diapason rolls
Its requiem grand, and God doth keep
The record of all their souls.

Ocean and wind be then ever free, Race and fare far as of yore; None would roam o'er a waveless sea, Or muse by a songless shore.





EPITAPH.

By ARTHUR W. Fox.

Mark that little verdant mound,
Where the turf is trimmed with flowers,
Where the breezes sadlier sound,
Dropping tears in sunny showers.

Once they wantoned in the night
Of her curls of raven hue;
Stirred her lashes glinting light,
From her lips drank floods of dew;

Nestled on her sighing breast, Whisper'd to her throbbing heart, Wander'd blithely on her hest, Scarce could tear themselves apart.

Still they mourn around her sleep, Moaning soothing lullabies; Ah! they cannot choose but weep, Sunk in endless rest she lies.

